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THE WRITINGS OF

LAFCADIO HEARN

Large-Paper Edition

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME II

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A Dock Scene in New Orleans

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STRAY LEAVES FROM STRANGE LITERATURE

AND

FANTASTICS AND OTHER FANCIES

BY

LAFCADIO HEARN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
MDCCCCXXII

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NOTE

THE thanks of the Publishers are due to Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, for corrections in the spelling of proper names in the Tales from India and Buddhist Literature included in this volume.

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STRAY LEAVES
FROM STRANGE LITERATURE

STORIES

RECONSTRUCTED FROM THE ANVARI-SOHEÏLI, BAITÁL PACHÍSÍ, MAHABHARATA, PANTCHA-TANTRA, GULISTAN, TALMUD, KALEWALA, ETC.

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TO MY FRIEND

PAGE M. BAKER

EDITOR OF THE

NEW ORLEANS TIMES-DEMOCRAT

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EXPLANATORY

WHILE engaged upon this little mosaic work of legend and fable, I felt much like one of those merchants told of in Sindbad's Second Voyage, who were obliged to content themselves with gathering the small jewels adhering to certain meat which eagles brought up from the Valley of Diamonds. I have had to depend altogether upon the labor of translators for my acquisitions; and these seemed too small to deserve separate literary setting. By cutting my little gems according to one pattern, I have doubtless reduced the beauty of some; yet it seemed to me their colors were so weird, their luminosity so elfish, that their intrinsic value could not be wholly destroyed even by so clumsy an artificer as I.

In short, these fables, legends, parables, etc., are simply reconstructions of what impressed me as most fantastically beautiful in the most exotic literature which I was able to obtain. With few exceptions, the plans of the original narratives have been preserved. Sometimes I have added a little, sometimes curtailed; but the augmentations were generally made with material drawn from the same source as the legend, while the abbreviations were effected either with a view to avoid repetition, or through the necessity of suppressing incidents un-

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suited to the general reading. I must call special attention to certain romantic liberties or poetic licenses which I have taken.

In the Polynesian story ("The Fountain Maiden") I have considerably enlarged upon the legend, which I found in Gill's *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific* — a curious but inartistic book, in which much admirable material has been very dryly handled. In another portion of Mr. Gill's book I found the text and translation of the weird "Thieves' Song"; and conceived the idea of utilizing it in the story, with some fanciful changes. The Arabic "Legend of Love" is still more apocryphal, as it consists of fragmentary Arabian stories, borrowed from De Stendahl's *L'Amour*, and welded into one narrative.

In the Rabbinical legends I have often united several incidents related about one personage in various of the Talmudic treatises; but this system is sufficiently specified by references to the *Gemara* in the text. By consulting the indices attached to Hershon's *Miscellany*, and Schwab's translations of the Jerusalem Talmud, it was easy to collect a number of singular traditions attaching to one distinguished Rabbi, and to unite these into a narrative. Finally, I must confess that the story of "Natalika" was not drawn directly from Ferista, or Fihristah, but from Jacolliot, a clever writer, but untrustworthy Orientalist, whose books have little serious value. Whether true or false, however, the legend of the statue seemed to me too pretty to overlook.

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In one case only have I made a veritable translation from the French. Léouzon Le Duc's literal version of the "Kalewala" seemed to me the most charming specimen of poetical prose I had met with among translations. I selected three incidents, and translated them almost word for word.

Nearly all of the Italic texts, although fancifully arranged, have been drawn from the literatures of those peoples whose legends they introduce. Many phrases were obtained from that inexhaustible treasury of Indian wisdom, the *Pantchatantra;* others from various Buddhist works. The introductory text of the piece, entitled "The King's Justice," was borrowed from the Persian *Mantic Uttaïr*, of Farid Uddin Attar; and the text at the commencement of the Buddhist Parable (which was refashioned after a narrative in Stanislas Julien's *Avadanas*) was taken from the *Dhammapada*. The briefer stories, I think, have generally suffered less at my hands than the lengthier ones. That wonderful Egyptian romance about the Book of Thoth is far more striking in Maspéro's French translations from the original papyrus; but the Egyptian phrases are often characterized by a nakedness rather more startling than that of the dancing girls in the mural paintings. . . .

Upon another page will be found a little bibliography of nearly all the sources whence I have drawn my material. Some volumes are mentioned only because they gave me one or two phrases. Thus, I borrowed expressions or ideas from "Amarou," from

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Fauche's translation of the *Ritou Sanhara*, and especially from the wealth of notes to Chézy's superb translation of *Sacountala*.

This little collection has no claim upon the consideration of scholars. It is simply an attempt to share with the public some of those novel delights I experienced while trying to familiarize myself with some very strange and beautiful literatures.

During its preparation two notable works have appeared with a partly similar purpose: Helen Zimmern's *Epic of Kings*, and Edwin Arnold's *Rosary of Islam*. In the former we have a charming popular version of Firdusi, and upon the latter are exquisitely strung some of the fairest pearls of the "Mesnewi." I hope my far less artistic contribution to the popularization of unfamiliar literature may stimulate others to produce something worthier than I can hope to do. My gems were few and small: the monstrous and splendid await the coming of Sindbad, or some mighty lapidary by whom they may be wrought into jewel bouquets exquisite as those bunches of topaz blossoms and ruby buds laid upon the tomb of Nourmahal.

NEW ORLEANS, 1884

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* * *

THE BOOK OF THOTH

AN Egyptian tale of weirdness, as told in a demotic papyrus found in the necropolis of Deir-el-Medineh among the ruins of hundred-gated Thebes.... Written in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of some forgotten Ptolomæus, and in the month of Tybi completed by a scribe famous among magicians.... Dedicated, doubtless, to Thoth, Lord of all Scribes, Grand Master of all Sorcerers; whose grace had been reverently invoked upon whomsoever might speak well concerning the same papyrus....

...THOTH, the divine, lord of scribes, most excellent of workers, prince of wizards, once, it is said, wrote with his own hand a book surpassing all other books, and containing two magical formulas only. Whosoever could recite the first of these formulas would become forthwith second only to the gods — for by its simple utterance the mountains and the valleys, the ocean and the clouds, the heights of heaven and the deeps of hell, would be made subject unto his will; while the birds of air, the reptiles of darkness, and the fishes of the waters, would be thereby compelled to appear, and to make manifest the thoughts secreted within their hearts. But whosoever could recite the second formula might never

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know death — for even though buried within the entrails of the earth, he would still behold heaven through the darkness and hear the voices of earth athwart the silence; even in the necropolis he would still see the rising and setting of the sun, and the Cycle of the Gods, and the waxing and waning of the moon, and the eternal lights of the firmament.

And the god Thoth deposited his book within a casket of gold, and the casket of gold within a casket of silver, and the casket of silver within a casket of ivory and ebony, and the casket of ivory and ebony within a casket of palm-wood, and the casket of palm-wood within a casket of bronze, and the casket of bronze within a casket of iron. And he buried the same in the bed of the great river of Egypt where it flows through the Nome of Coptos; and immortal river monsters coiled about the casket to guard it from all magicians.

Now, of all magicians, Noferkephtah, the son of King Minibphtah (to whom be life, health, and strength forevermore!), first by cunning discovered the place where the wondrous book was hidden, and found courage to possess himself thereof. For after he had well paid the wisest of the ancient priests to direct his way, Noferkephtah obtained from his father Pharaoh a royal cangia, well supplied and stoutly manned, wherein he journeyed to Coptos in search of the hidden treasure. Coming to Coptos after many days, he created him a magical boat and

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a magical crew by reciting mystic words; and he and the shadowy crew with him toiled to find the casket; and by the building of dams they were enabled to find it. Then Noferkephtah prevailed also against the immortal serpent by dint of sorcery; and he obtained the book, and read the mystic formulas, and made himself second only to the gods.

But the divinities, being wroth with him, caused his sister and wife Ahouri to fall into the Nile, and his son also. Noferkephtah indeed compelled the river to restore them; but although the power of the book maintained their life after a strange fashion, they lived not as before, so that he had to bury them in the necropolis at Coptos. Seeing these things and fearing to return to the king alone, he tied the book above his heart, and also allowed himself to drown. The power of the book, indeed, maintained his life after a strange fashion; but he lived not as before, so that they took him back to Thebes as one who had passed over to Amenthi, and there laid him with his fathers, and the book also.

Yet, by the power of the book, he lived within the darkness of the tomb, and beheld the sun rising, and the Cycle of the Gods, and the phases of the moon, and the stars of the night. By the power of the book, also, he summoned to him the shadow of his sister Ahouri, buried at Coptos — whom he had made his wife according to the custom of the Egyptians; and there was light within their dwelling-

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place. Thus Noferkephtah knew ghostly happiness in the company of the Ka, or shadow, of his wife Ahouri, and the Ka of his son Mikhonsou.

Now, four generations had passed since the time of King Minibphtah; and the Pharaoh of Egypt was Ousirmari. Ousirmari had two sons who were learned among the Egyptians — Satni was the name of the elder; Anhathorerôou that of the younger. There was not in all Egypt so wise a scribe as Satni. He knew how to read the sacred writings, and the inscriptions upon the amulets, and the sentences within the tombs, and the words graven upon the stelæ, and the books of that sacerdotal library called the "Double House of Life." Also he knew the composition of all formulas of sorcery and of all sentences which spirits obey, so that there was no enchanter like him in all Egypt. And Satni heard of Noferkephtah and the book of Thoth from a certain aged priest, and resolved that he would obtain it. But the aged priest warned him, saying, "Beware thou dost not wrest the book from Noferkephtah, else thou wilt be enchanted by him, and compelled to bear it back to him within the tomb, and do great penance."

Nevertheless Satni sought and obtained permission of the king to descend into the necropolis of Thebes, and to take away, if he might, the book from thence. So he went thither with his brother.

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Three days and three nights the brothers sought for the tomb of Noferkephtah in the immeasurable city of the dead; and after they had threaded many miles of black corridors, and descended into many hundred burial pits, and were weary with the deciphering of innumerable inscriptions by quivering light of lamps, they found his resting-place at last. Now, when they entered the tomb their eyes were dazzled; for Noferkephtah was lying there with his wife Ahouri beside him; and the book of Thoth, placed between them, shed such a light around, that it seemed like the brightness of the sun. And when Satni entered, the Shadow of Ahouri rose against the light; and she asked him, "Who art thou?"

Then Satni answered: "I am Satni, son of King Ousirmari; and I come for the book of Thoth which is between thee and Noferkephtah; and if thou wilt not give it me, I shall wrest it away by force."

But the Shadow of the woman replied to him: "Nay, be not unreasoning in thy words! Do not ask for this book. For we, in obtaining it, were deprived of the pleasure of living upon earth for the term naturally allotted us; neither is this enchanted life within the tomb like unto the life of Egypt. Nowise can the book serve thee; therefore listen rather to the recital of all those sorrows which befell us by reason of this book. . . ."

But after hearing the story of Ahouri, the heart of Satni remained as bronze; and he only repeated:

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"If thou wilt not give me the book which is between thee and Noferkephtah, I shall wrest it away by force."

Then Noferkephtah rose up within the tomb, and laughed, saying: "O Satni, if thou art indeed a true scribe, win this book from me by thy skill! If thou art not afraid, play against me a game for the possession of this book — a game of *fifty-two!*" Now there was a chess-board within the tomb.

Then Satni played a game of chess with Noferkephtah, while the Kas, the Shadows, the Doubles of Ahouri, and the large-eyed boy looked on. But the eyes with which they gazed upon him, and the eyes of Noferkephtah also, strangely disturbed him, so that Satni's brain whirled, and the web of his thought became entangled, and he lost! Noferkephtah laughed, and uttered a magical word, and placed the chess-board upon Satni's head; and Satni sank to his knees into the floor of the tomb.

Again they played, and the result was the same. Then Noferkephtah uttered another magical word, and again placed the chess-board upon Satni's head; and Satni sank to his hips into the floor of the tomb.

Once more they played, and the result was the same. Then Noferkephtah uttered a third magical word, and laid the chess-board on Satni's head, and Satni sank up to his ears into the floor of the tomb!

Then Satni shrieked to his brother to bring him certain talismans quickly; and the brother fetched

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the talismans, and placed them upon Satni's head, and by magical amulets saved him from the power of Noferkephtah. But having done this, Anhathore-rôou fell dead within the tomb.

And Satni put forth his hand and took the book from Noferkephtah, and went out of the tomb into the corridors; while the book lighted the way for him, so that a great brightness traveled before him, and deep blackness went after him. Into the darkness Ahouri followed him, lamenting, and crying out: "Woe! woe upon us! The light that gave life is taken from us; the hideous Nothingness will come upon us! Now, indeed, will annihilation enter into the tomb!" But Noferkephtah called Ahouri to him, and bade her cease to weep, saying to her: "Grieve not after the book; for I shall make him bring it back to me, with a fork and stick in his hand and a lighted brazier upon his head."

But when the king Ousirmari heard of all that had taken place, he became very much alarmed for his son, and said to him: "Behold! thy folly has already caused the death of thy brother Anhathore-rôou; take heed, therefore, lest it bring about thine own destruction likewise. Noferkephtah dead is even a mightier magician than thou. Take back the book forthwith, lest he destroy thee."

And Satni replied: "Lo! never have I owned a sensual wish, nor done evil to *living* creature; how, then, can the dead prevail against me? It is only the

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foolish scribe — the scribe who hath not learned the mastery of passions — that may be overcome by enchantment."

And he kept the book.

Now it came to pass that a few days after, while Satni stood upon the parvise of the temple of Pthah, he beheld a woman so beautiful that from the moment his eyes fell upon her he ceased to act like one living, and all the world grew like a dream about him. And while the young woman was praying in the temple, Satni heard that her name was Thoutboui, daughter of a prophet. Whereupon he sent a messenger to her, saying: "Thus declares my master: I, the Prince Satni, son of King Ousirmari, do so love thee that I feel as one about to die.... If thou wilt love me as I desire, thou shalt have kingliest gifts; otherwise, know that I have the power to bury thee alive among the dead, so that none may ever see thee again."

And Thoutboui on hearing these words appeared not at all astonished, nor angered, nor terrified; but her great black eyes laughed, and she answered, saying: "Tell thy master, Prince Satni, son of King Ousirmari, to visit me within my house at Bubastes, whither I am even now going." ... Thereupon she went away with her retinue of maidens.

So Satni hastened forthwith to Bubastes by the river, and to the house of Thoutboui, the prophet's

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daughter. In all the place there was no house like unto her house; it was lofty and long, and surrounded by a garden all encircled with a white wall. And Satni followed Thoutboui's serving-maid into the house, and by a coiling stairway to an upper chamber wherein were broad beds of ebony and ivory, and rich furniture curiously carved, and tripods with burning perfumes, and tables of cedar with cups of gold. And the walls were coated with lapis-lazuli inlaid with emerald, making a strange and pleasant light.... Thoutboui appeared upon the threshold, robed in textures of white, transparent as the dresses of those dancing women limned upon the walls of the Pharaohs' palace; and as she stood against the light, Satni, beholding the litheness of her limbs, the flexibility of her body, felt his heart cease to beat within him, so that he could not speak. But she served him with wine, and took from his hands the gifts which he had brought — and she suffered him to kiss her.

Then said Thoutboui: "Not lightly is my love to be bought with gifts. Yet will I test thee, since thou dost so desire. If thou wilt be loved by me, therefore, make over to me by deed all thou hast — thy gold and thy silver, thy lands and houses, thy goods and all that belongs to thee. So that the house wherein I dwell may become thy house!"

And Satni, looking into the long black jewels of her eyes, forgot the worth of all that he possessed; and a scribe was summoned, and the scribe drew

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up the deed giving to Thoutboui all the goods of Satni.

Then said Thoutboui: "Still will I test thee, since thou dost so desire. If thou wilt have my love, make over to me thy children, also, as my slaves, lest they should seek dispute with my children concerning that which was thine. So that the house in which I dwell may become thy house!"

And Satni, gazing upon the witchery of her bosom, curved like ivory carving, rounded like the eggs of the ostrich, forgot his loving children; and the deed was written.... Even at that moment a messenger came, saying: "O Satni, thy children are below, and await thee." And he said: "Bid them ascend hither."

Then said Thoutboui: "Still will I test thee, since thou dost so desire. If thou wilt have my love, let thy children be put to death, lest at some future time they seek to claim that which thou hast given. So that the house in which I dwell may be thy house!"

And Satni, enchanted with the enchantment of her pliant stature, of her palmy grace, of her ivorine beauty, forgot even his fatherhood, and answered: "Be it so; were I ruler of heaven, even heaven would I give thee for a kiss."

Then Thoutboui had the children of Satni slain before his eyes; yet he sought not to save them! She bade her servant cast their bodies from the windows to the cats and to the dogs below; yet Satni

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lifted not his hand to prevent it! And while he drank wine with Thoutboui, he could hear the growling of the animals that were eating the flesh of his children. But he only moaned to her: "Give me thy love! I am as one in hell for thy sake!" And she arose, and, entering another chamber, turned and held out her wonderful arms to him, and drew him to her with the sorcery of her unutterable eyes....

But as Satni sought to clasp her and to kiss her, lo! her ruddy mouth opened and extended and broadened and deepened — yawning wider, darker, quickly, vastly — a blackness as of necropoles, a vastness as of Amenthi! And Satni beheld only a gulf before him, deepening and shadowing like night; and from out the gulf a burst of tempest roared up, and bore him with it, and whirled him abroad as a leaf. And his senses left him....

... When he came again to himself, he was lying naked at the entrance of the subterranean sepulchres; and a great horror and despair came upon him, so that he purposed ending his life. But the servants of the king found him, and bore him safely to his father. And Ousirmari heard the ghostly tale.

Then said Ousirmari: "O Satni, Noferkephtah dead is a mightier magician than even thou living. Know, my son, first of all that thy children are alive and well in my own care; know, also, that the woman

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by whose beauty thou wert bewitched, and for whom thou hast in thought committed all heinous crimes, was a phantom wrought by Noferkephtah's magic. Thus, by exciting thee to passion, did he bring thy magical power to nought. And now, my dear son, haste with the book to Noferkephtah, lest thou perish utterly, with all thy kindred."

So Satni took the book of Thoth, and, carrying a fork and stick in his hands and a lighted brazier upon his head, carried it to the Theban necropolis and into the tomb of Noferkephtah. And Ahouri clapped her hands, and smiled to see the light again return. And Noferkephtah laughed, saying: "Did I not tell thee beforehand?" "Aye!" said Ahouri, "thou wert enchanted, O Satni!" But Satni, prostrating himself before Noferkephtah, asked how he might make atonement.

"O Satni," answered Noferkephtah, "my wife and my son are indeed buried at Coptos; these whom thou seest here are their Doubles only — their Shadows, their Kas — maintained with me by enchantment. Seek out their resting-place at Coptos, therefore, and bury their bodies with me, that we may all be thus reunited, and that thou mayst do penance."...

So Satni went to Coptos, and there found an ancient priest, who told him the place of Ahouri's sepulture, saying: "The father of the father of my father told it to my father's father, who told it to my father."... Then Satni found the bodies, and

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restored to Noferkephtah his wife and his son; and thus did penance. After which the tomb of Noferkephtah was sealed up forever by Pharaoh's order; and no man knoweth more the place of Noferkephtah's sepulture.

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THE FOUNTAIN MAIDEN

A LEGEND of that pacific land where garments are worn by none save the dead; where the beauty of youth is as the beauty of statues of amber; where through eternal summer even the mountains refuse to don a girdle of cloud....

MIGHTY OMATAIANUKU!
Dark Avaava the Tall!
Tall Outuutu!
Shadow the way for us!
Tower as the cocoa-palms before us!
Bend ye as dreams above the slumberers!
Make deeper the sleep of the sleepers!

Sleep, ye crickets of the threshold! Sleep, ye never reposing ants! Sleep, ye shining beetles of the night!

Winds, cease ye from whispering! Restless grass, pause in thy rustling! Leaves of the palms, be still! Reeds of the water-ways, sway not! Blue river, cease thy lipping of the banks!

Slumber, ye beams of the house, ye posts, great and small, ye rafters and ridge-poles, thatchings of grass, woven work of reeds, windows bamboo-latticed, doors that squeak like ghosts, low-glimmering fires of sandal-wood — slumber ye all!

O Omataianuku!
Tall Outuutu!
Dark Avaava!
Make shadowy the way for us!
Tower as the cocoa-palms before us!
Bend ye as dreams above the slumberers!
Make deeper the sleep of the sleepers —

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Deeper the sleep of the winds —
Deeper the sleep of the waters —
Dimmer the dimness of night!
Veil ye the moon with your breathings!
Make fainter the fires of the stars!
In the name of the weird ones:
Omataianuku!
Outuuturoraa!
Ovaavaroroa!
Sleep!
Sleep!

So, with the rising of each new moon, was heard the magical song of the thieves — the first night, low as the humming of the wind among the cocoa-palms; louder and louder each succeeding night, and clearer and sweeter, until the great white face of the full moon flooded the woods with light, and made silver pools about the columns of the palms. For the magic of the full moon was mightier than the witchcraft of the song; and the people of Rarotonga slept not. But of other nights the invisible thieves did carry away many cocoanuts and taros, and plantains and bananas, despite the snares set for them by the people of Rarotonga. And it was observed with terror that cocoanuts were removed from the crests of trees so lofty that no human hand might have reached them.

But the chief Aki, being one night by the fountain Vaipiki, which gushes out from the place of waters that flow below the world, beheld rising up from the

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water, just as the thin moon looked into it, a youth and a girl whiter than the moon herself, naked as fishes, beautiful as dreams. And they began to sing a song, at whose sound Aki, hidden among the pandanus leaves, stopped his ears — the wizard-song, E tira Omataianuku, E tira Outuuturoroa! And the winds were stilled, and the waves sank to sleep, and the palm-leaves ceased to nod, and the song of the crickets was hushed.

Then Aki, devising to capture them, set a great fish-net deep within the fountain, and waited for their return. The vast silence of the night deepened; the smoke of the mountain of fire, blood-tinted from below, hung motionless in the sky, like a giant's plume of feathers. At last the winds of the sea began their ghost whisperings among the palm-groves; a cricket chirped, and a million insect-chants responded; the new moon plunged one of her pale horns into the ocean; the east whitened and changed hue like the belly of a shark. The spell was broken, the day was dawning.

And Aki beheld the White Ones returning, bearing with them fruits and nuts and fragrant herbs. Rising suddenly from his hiding-place among the leaves, he rushed upon them; and they leaped into the fountain, like fishes, leaving their fruits scattered upon the brink. But, lo! they were caught in the net!

Then Aki strove to pull the net on shore; and,

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being a strong man, he easily moved it. But, in turning, the male leaped through the opening of the net, and flashed like a salmon through the deeps down to the unknown abyss of waters below, so that Aki caught the girl only. Vainly she struggled in the net; and her moon-white body took opalescent gleams, like the body of a beautiful fish in the hands of the captor. Vainly she wept and pleaded; and Aki blocked up the bottom of the fountain with huge blocks of coral, lest, slipping away from him, she might disappear again. But, looking upon the strangeness of her beauty, he kissed her and comforted her; and she ceased at last to weep. Her eyes were large and dark, like a tropical heaven flashed with stars.

So it came to pass that Aki loved her; more than his own life he loved her. And the people wondered at her beauty; for light came from her as she moved, and when she swam in the river her passage was like the path of the moon on waters — a quivering column of brightness. Only, it was noticed that this luminous beauty waxed and waned contrariwise to the waxing and waning of the moon: her whiteness was whitest at the time of the new moon; it almost ceased to glow when the face of the moon was full. And whensoever the new moon rose, she wept silently, so that Aki could not comfort her, even after having taught her the words of love in the tongue of his own people — the tongue, many-

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voweled, that wooes the listener like the mockery of a night-bird's song.

Thus many years passed away, and Aki became old; but she seemed ever the same, for the strange race to which she belonged never grow old. Then it was noticed that her eyes became deeper and sweeter — weirdly sweet; and Aki knew that he would become a father in his age. Yet she wept and pleaded with him, saying:

"Lo! I am not of thy race, and at last I must leave thee. If thou lovest me, sever this white body of mine, and save our child; for if it suckle me, I must dwell ten years longer in this world to which I do not belong. Thou canst not hurt me thus; for though I seem to die, yet my body will live on — thou mayst not wound me more than water is wounded by axe or spear! For I am of the water and the light, of moonshine and of wind! And I may not suckle thy child."...

But Aki, fearing that he might lose both her and the child, pleaded with her successfully. And the child was beautiful as a white star, and she nursed it for ten happy years.

But, the ten years having passed, she kissed Aki, and said to him, "Alas! I must now leave thee, lest I die utterly; take thou away, therefore, the coral rocks from the fountain." And kissing him once more, she vowed to come back again, so that he complied at last with her request. She would have

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had him go with her; but he could not, being only mortal man. Then she passed away in the fountain deeps, like a gleam of light.

The child grew up very tall and beautiful, but not like his mother — white only like strangers from beyond the sea. In his eyes there was, nevertheless, a strange light, brightest at the time of the new moon, waning with its waxing.... One night there came a great storm: the cocoa-palms bent like reeds, and a strange voice came with the wind, crying, calling! At dawn the white youth was gone, nor did human eyes ever behold him again.

But Aki lived beyond a hundred years, waiting for the return by the Vaipiki fountain, until his hair was whiter than the summer clouds. At last the people carried him away, and laid him in his house on a bed of pandanus leaves; and all the women watched over him, lest he should die.

... It was the night of a new month, and the rising of the new moon. Suddenly a low sweet voice was heard, singing the old song that some remembered after the passing of half a hundred years. Sweeter and sweeter it grew; higher rose the moon! The crickets ceased to sing; the cocoa-palms refused obeisance to the wind. And a heaviness fell upon the watchers, who, with open eyes, could move no limb, utter no voice. Then all were aware of a White Woman, whiter than moonlight, lithe-fashioned as a lake-fish, gliding between the ranks of the watchers;

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and, taking Aki's gray head upon her bright breast, she sang to him, and kissed him, and stroked his aged face....

The sun arose; the watchers awakened. They bent over Aki, and it seemed that Aki slept lightly. But when they called him, he answered not; when they touched him, he stirred not. He slept forever!...

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THE BIRD WIFE

THERE the Moon becometh old and again young many times, as one that dieth often and is reanimated as often by enchantment; while the Sun moveth in a circle of pallid mists, and setteth not. But when he setteth at last, it is still light; for the dead make red fires in the sky above the icebergs until after many, many dim months he riseth again.

ALL things there are white, save the black sea and the wan fogs; and yet it is hard to discover where the water ends and the land begins, for that part of the world the gods forgot to finish. The ice-peaks grow and diminish, and shift their range northward and southward, and change their aspects grotesquely. There are Faces in the ice that lengthen and broaden; and Forms as of vanished creatures. When it is full moon the innumerable multitude of dogs, that live upon dead fish, howl all together at the roaring sea; and the great bears hearing huddle themselves together on the highest heights of the glaciers, and thence hurl down sharp white crags upon the dogs. Above all, rising into the Red Lights, there is a mountain which has been a fountain of living fire ever since the being of the world; and all the surface of the land about is heaped with monstrous bones. But this is summer in that place; in winter there is no sound but the groaning of the

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ice, the shrieking of the winds, the gnashing of the teeth of the floes.

Now there are men in those parts, whose houses are huts of snow, lighted by lamps fed with the oil of sea-creatures; and the wild dogs obey them. But they live in fear of the Havstramb, that monster which has the form of an armless man and the green color of ancient ice; they fear the Margige, shaped like a woman, which cries under the ice on which their huts repose; and the goblin Bear whose fangs are icicles; and the Kajarissat, which are the spirits of the icebergs, drawing the kayaks under the black water; and the ghostly ivory-hunter who drives his vapory and voiceless team over ice thinner than the scales of fish; and the white Spectre that lies in wait for those who lose their way by night, having power to destroy all whom he can excite to laughter by weird devices; and the white-eyed deer which must not be pursued. There also is the home of the warlocks, the wizards, the Iliseetsut — creators of the Tupilek.

Now the Tupilek is of all awful things the most awful, of all unutterable things the most unutterable.

For that land is full of bones — the bones of sea monsters and of earth monsters, the skulls and ribs of creatures that perished in eons ere man was born; and there are mountains, there are islands, of these bones. Sometimes great merchants from far southern countries send thither ivory-hunters with

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sledges and innumerable dogs to risk their lives for those white teeth, those terrific tusks, which protrude from the ice and from the sand, that is not deep enough to cover them. And the Iliseetsut seek out the hugest of these bones, and wrap them in a great whale skin, together with the hearts and the brains of many sea creatures and earth animals; and they utter strange words over them. Then the vast mass quivers and groans and shapes itself into a form more hideous, more enormous, than any form created by the gods; it moves upon many feet; it sees with many eyes; it devours with innumerable teeth; it obeys the will of its creator; it is a Tupilek!

And all things change form in that place — even as the ice shifts its shapes fantastically, as the boundaries of the sand eternally vary, as bone becomes earth and earth seems to become bone. So animals also take human likeness, birds assume human bodies; for there is sorcery in all things there. Thus it came to pass, one day, that a certain ivory-hunter beheld a flock of sea-birds change themselves into women; and creeping cautiously over the white snow — himself being clad in white skins — he came suddenly upon them, and caught hold of the nearest one with a strong hand, while the rest, turning again to birds, flew southward with long weird screams.

Slender was the girl, like a young moon, and as

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white; and her eyes black and soft, like those of the wild gulls. So the hunter — finding that she struggled not, but only wept — felt pity for her, and, taking her into his warm hut of snow, clothed her in soft skins and fed her with the heart of a great fish. Then, his pity turning to love, she became his wife.

Two years they lived thus together, and he fed her with both fish and flesh, being skillful in the use of the net and the bow; but always while absent he blocked up the door of the hut, lest she might change into a bird again, and so take wing. After she had borne him two children, nevertheless, his fear passed from him, like the memory of a dream; and she followed him to the chase, managing the bow with wonderful skill. But she prevailed upon him that he should not smite the wild gulls.

So they lived and so loved until the children became strong and swift.

Then it came to pass one day, while they were hunting all together, that many birds had been killed; and she called to the children, "Little ones, bring me quickly some feathers!" And they came to her with their hands full; and she laid the feathers upon their arms and upon her own shoulders, and shrieked to them, "Fly! ye are of the race of birds, ye are the Wind's children!"

Forthwith their garments fell from them; and, being changed into wild gulls, mother and children rose in the bright icy air, circling and circling, higher

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and higher, against the sky. Thrice above the weeping father they turned in spiral flight, thrice screamed above the peaks of glimmering ice, and, sweeping suddenly toward the far south, whirred away forever.

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TALES FROM INDIAN AND BUDDHIST LITERATURE

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TALES FROM INDIAN AND BUDDHIST LITERATURE

* * *

THE MAKING OF TILOTTAMA

WHICH is told of in the holy "Mahabharata," written by the blessed Rishi Krishna-Dvaipayana, who composed it in twenty-four thousand slokas,[1] and who composed six millions of slokas likewise. Of the latter are three millions in the keeping of the gods; and one million five hundred thousand in the keeping of the Gandharvas, who are the musicians of Indra's Heaven; and one million four hundred thousand in the keeping of the Pitris, who are the ghosts of the blessed dead; and one hundred thousand in the keeping of men.... And the guiltiest of men who shall hear the recital of the "Mahabharata" shall be delivered from all his sins; neither sickness nor misfortune shall come nigh him.

Now I shall tell you how it happened that the great gods once became multiple-faced and myriad-eyed by reason of a woman's beauty, as the same is recounted in the Book of Great Weight — in the Mahabharata.

In ancient years there were two Daityas, twin brothers sprung from the race of the Asouras, the

[1] According to the exordium in the *Adi-Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, this now most gigantic of epics at first consisted of 24,000 slokas only. Subsequent additions swelled the number of its distiches to the prodigious figure of 107,389. — L. H.

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race of evil genii; and their names were Sounda and Oupasounda. Princes they were born; cruel and terrible they grew up, yet were ever one in purpose, in thought, in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the perpetration of crime.

And in the course of time it came to pass that the brothers resolved to obtain domination over the Three Worlds, and to practice all those austerities and sacrifices by which the holiest ascetics elevate themselves to divinity. So they departed to the solitude of the mountain Vindhya, and there devoted themselves to contemplations and to prayer, until their mighty limbs became slender as jungle-canes, and their joints like knots of bone. And they ceased all the actions of life, and forebore all contact with things earthly — knowing that contact with earthly things begetteth sensation, and sensation desire, and desire corruption, and corruption existence. Thus by dint of meditation and austerity the world became for them as non-existent. By one effort of will they might have shaken the universe; the world trembled under the weight of their thoughts as though laboring in earthquake. Air was their only nourishment; they offered up their own flesh in sacrifice; and the Vindhya, heated by the force of their austerities, smoked to heaven like a mountain of fire.

Therefore the divinities, being terrified, sought to divert them from their austerities, and to trouble their senses by apparitions of women and of demons

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and of gods. But the Asouras ceased not a moment to practice their mortifications, standing upon their great toes only, and keeping their eyes fixed upon the sun.

Now, after many years, it came to pass that Brahma, Ancient of Days, Father of the Creator of Worlds, appeared before them as a Shape of light, and bade them ask for whatsoever they desired. And they made answer, with hands joined before their foreheads: "If the Father of the Father of Worlds be gratified by our penances, we desire to acquire knowledge of all arts of magic and arts of war, to possess the gifts of beauty and of strength, and the promise of immortality."

But the Shape of Brahma answered unto them: "Immortality will not be given unto you, O Princes of Daityas, inasmuch as ye practiced austerities only that ye might obtain dominion over the Three Worlds. Yet will I grant ye the knowledge and power and the bodily gifts ye desire. Also it shall be vouchsafed you that none shall be able to destroy you; neither among creatures of earth nor spirits nor gods shall any have power to do you hurt, save ye hurt one another."

Thus the two Daityas obtained the favor of Brahma, and became unconquerable by gods or men. And they returned to their habitation, and departed utterly from the path of righteousness, eating and drinking and sinning exceedingly, more than any of

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their evil race had done before them; so that their existence might be likened to one never-ending feast of unholy pleasures. But no pleasures could satiate these Asouras, though all mortals dwelling with them suffered by reason of monstrous excesses.

By the two Daityas, indeed, repose and sleep were never desired nor even needed — night and day were as one for them; but those mortals about them speedily died of pleasure, and the Daityas were angry with them because they died.

Now, at last, the two Asouras resolved to forego pleasure awhile, that they might make the conquest of the Three Worlds by force of that magical knowledge imparted to them by will of Brahma. And they warred against Indra's Heaven; for it had been given them to move through air more swiftly than demons. The Souras, indeed, and the gods knowing of their coming and the nature of the powers that had been given them, passed away to the Brahmaloka, where dwell the spirits of the holiest dead. But the Daityas, taking possession with their army of evil genii, slew many of the Yakshas, who are the guardians of treasures, and the Rakshasas, which are demons, and multitudes of all the beings which fly through the airs. After these things they slew all the Nagas, the human-visaged serpents living in the entrails of the world; and they overcame all the creatures of the sea.

Then they made resolve to extend their evil power

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over the whole earth, and to destroy all worshipers of the gods. For the prayers and the sacrifices offered up by the Rajarshis and the Brahmans continually augmented the power of the gods; and these Daityas therefore hated exceedingly all holy men. Because of the power given the wicked princes, none could oppose their will, nor did the mighty imprecations of the hermits and the Brahmans avail. All worshipers of the gods were destroyed; the eternal altar-fires were scattered and extinguished; the holy offerings were cast into the waters; the sacred vessels were broken; the awful temples were cast down; and the face of the earth made vast with desolation, as though ravaged by the god of death. And the Asouras, changing themselves by magical art into the form of tigers, of lions, of furious elephants, sought out all those ascetics who lived in the secret hollows of the mountains or the unknown recesses of the forest or the deep silence of the jungles, and destroyed them. So that the world became a waste strewn with human bones; and there were no cities, no populations, no smoke of sacrifice, no murmur of prayer, no human utterance — vast horror only, and hideous death.

Then all the holy people of air — the Siddhas and the Devarshis and the Paramarshis — aghast at the desolation of the world, and filled with divinest compassion for the universe, flocked to the dwelling-place of Brahma, and made plaint to him of these

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things which had been done, and besought him that he would destroy the power of Sounda and Oupasounda. Now Brahma was seated among the gods, surrounded by the circles of the Siddhas and the Bramarshis; Mahadeva was there, and Indra, and Agni, Prince of Fire, and Vayou, Lord of Winds, and Aditya, the Sun-god, who drives the seven-headed steeds, and Chandra, the lotus-loving god of the Moon. And all the elders of heaven stood about them — the holy Marichipas and Ajas and Avimoudhas and Tejogharbas; the Vanaprasthas of the forest, and the Siddhas of the airs, and the Vaikhanas who live upon roots, and the sixty thousand luminous Balakhilyas — not bigger than the thumb of a man — who sprang from the hairs of Brahma.

Then from the violet deeps of the eternities Brahma summoned unto him Viswakarman, the Fashioner of the Universe, the Creator of Worlds — Viswakarman, Kindler of all the Lights of Heaven. And Viswakarman arose from the eternities as a star-cloud, and stood in light before the All-Father.

And Brahma spake unto him, saying: "O my golden son, O Viswakarman, create me a woman fairer than the fairest, sweeter than the sweetest — whose beauty might even draw the hearts of all divinities, as the moon draweth all the waters in her train.... I wait!"

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So Viswakarman, veiling himself in mists, wrought in obedience to the Father of Gods, invisibly, awfully, with all manner of precious gems, with all colors of heaven, with all perfume of flowers, with all rays of light, with all tones of music, with all things beautiful and precious to the sight, to the touch, to the hearing, to the taste, to the sense of odors. And as vapors are wrought into leafiest lacework of frosts, as sunbeams are transmuted into gems of a hundred colors, so, all mysteriously, were ten thousand priceless things blended into one new substance of life; and the substance found shape, and was resolved into the body of a woman. All blossom-beauty tempted in her bosom; all perfume lingered in her breath; all jewel-fires made splendor for her eyes; her locks were wrought of sunlight and of gold; the flowers of heaven rebudded in her lips; the pearl and the fairy opal blended in her smile; the tones of her voice were made with the love-songs of a thousand birds. And a name was given unto her, Tilottama, which signifies in that ancient Indian tongue, spoken of gods and men, "Fair-wrought of daintiest atoms."... Then Viswakarman passed away as the glory of evening fades out, and sank into the Immensities, and mingled with the Eternities where no time or space is.

And Tilottama, clothed only with light as with a garment, joining her hands before her luminous brows in adoration, bowed down to the Father

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of Gods, and spake with the sweetest voice ever heard even within the heaven of heavens, saying: "O thou universal Father, let me know thy will, and the divine purpose for which I have been created."

And the deep tones of gold made answer, gently: "Descend, good Tilottama, into the world of men, and display the witchcraft of thy beauty in the sight of Sounda and Oupasounda, so that the Daityas may be filled with hatred, each against the other, because of thee."

"It shall be according to thy desire, O Master of Creatures," answered Tilottama; and, having prostrated her beautiful body thrice before Brahma, she glided about the circle of the gods, saluting all as she passed.

Now the great god Siva, the blessed Maheswara, was seated in the south, with face turned toward the east; the other gods were looking toward the north; and the seven orders of the rishis — the Devarshis, Bramarshis, Maharshis, Paramarshis, Rajarshis, Kandarshis, and Sroutarshis — sat upon every side. And while Tilottama passed around the circle, the gods strove not to gaze upon her, lest their hearts should be drawn irresistibly toward that magical beauty, created not for joy, indeed, but verily for destruction. So for a moment Indra and the blessed Sthanou made their hearts strong against her. But as she drew near to Maheswara, who kept his face to the east, there came to Maheswara another face, a

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face upon the south side, with eyes more beautiful than lotus-flowers. And when she turned behind him, there came to him yet another face upon the west side; and even as she turned to the north, there came to him a face upon the north side, so that he could not choose but gaze upon her. And even great Indra's body, as she turned around him, blossomed with eyes, before, behind, on every side, even to the number of a thousand eyes, large and deep and ruddy-lidded. Thus it was that Mahadeva became the Four-Faced God, and Balasoudana the God with a Thousand Eyes. And new faces grew upon all the divinities and all habitants of heaven as Tilottama passed around them; all became double-faced, triple-faced, or myriad-faced, in despite of their purpose not to look upon her, so mighty was the magic of her loveliness! Only Brahma, Father of all the Gods, remained impassive as eternity; for unto him beauty and hideousness, light and darkness, night and day, death and life, the finite and the infinite, are ever one and the same....

Now Sounda and Oupasounda were diverting themselves with their wicked women among the mountains, when they first perceived Tilottama gathering flowers; and at the sight of her their hearts ceased to pulsate. And they forgot not only all that they had done, and their riches and their power and their pleasures, but also the divine provision that they could die only by each other's

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hands. Each drew near unto Tilottama; each sought to kiss her mouth; each repulsed his brother; each claimed her for himself. And the first hatred of each other made flame in their eyes. "Mine she shall be!" cried Oupasounda. "Wrest her from me if thou canst!" roared Sounda in mad defiance. And passing from words to reproaches, and from reproaches to mighty blows, they fell upon each other with their weapons, and strove together until both were slain.

Then a great fear came upon all the evil company, and the women fled shrieking away; and the Asouras, beholding the hand of Brahma in these things, trembled, and took flight, returning unto their abode of fire and darkness, even unto the Patala, which is the habitation of the damned.

But Tilottama, returning to the Brahmaloka, received the commendation of the gods, and kindly praise from Brahma, Father of Worlds and Men, who bade her ask for whatsoever grace she most desired. But she asked him only that she might dwell forever in that world of splendors and of light, which the blessed inhabit. And the Universal Father made answer, saying: "Granted is thy prayer, O most seductive among created beings! thou shalt dwell in the neighborhood of the sun, yet not among the gods, lest mischief be wrought. And the dazzle of thy beauty shall hinder the eyes of mortals from beholding thee, that their hearts

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be not consumed because of thee. Dwell therefore within the heaven of the sun forevermore."

And Brahma, having restored to Indra the dominion of the Three Worlds, withdrew into the infinite light of the Brahmaloka.

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THE BRAHMAN AND HIS BRAHMANI

THE wise will not attach themselves unto women; for women sport with the hearts of those who love them, even as with ravens whose wing-feathers have been plucked out.... There is honey in the tongues of women; there is nought in their heart save the venom halahala.... Their nature is mobile as the eddies of the sea; their affection endures no longer than the glow of gold above the place of sunset: all venom within, all fair without, women are like unto the fruit of the goundja.... Therefore the experienced and wise do avoid women, even as they shun the water-vessels that are placed within the cemeteries....

IN the "Panchopakhyana," and also in that "Ocean of the Rivers of Legend," which is called in the ancient Indian tongue "Kathasaritsagara," may be found this story of a Brahman and his Brahmani:

... Never did the light that is in the eyes of lovers shine more tenderly than in the eyes of the Brahman who gave his life for the life of the woman under whose lotus-feet he laid his heart. Yet what man lives that hath not once in his time been a prey to the madness inspired by woman?...

He alone loved her; his family being loath to endure her presence — for in her tongue was the subtle poison that excites sister against brother, friend against friend. But so much did he love her

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that for her sake he abandoned father and mother, brother and sister, and departed with his Brahmani to seek fortune in other parts. Happily his guardian Deva accompanied him — for he was indeed a holy man, having no fault but the folly of loving too much; and the Deva, by reason of spiritual sight, foresaw all that would come to pass.

As they were journeying together through the elephant-haunted forest, the young woman said to her husband: "O thou son of a venerable man, thy Brahmani dies of thirst; fetch her, she humbly prays thee, a little water from the nearest spring." And the Brahman forthwith hastened to the running brook, with the gourd in his hand; but when he had returned with the water, he found his beloved lying dead upon a heap of leaves. Now this death was indeed the unseen work of the good Deva.

So, casting the gourd from him, the Brahman burst into tears, and sobbed as though his soul would pass from him, and kissed the beautiful dead face and the slender dead feet and the golden throat of his Brahmani, shrieking betimes in his misery, and daring to question the gods as to why they had so afflicted him. But even as he lamented, a voice answered him in syllables clear as the notes of a singing bird: "Foolish man! wilt thou give half of thy life in order that thy Brahmani shall live again?"

And he, in whom love had slain all fear, answered untremblingly to the Invisible: "Yea, O Narayana, half of my life will I give unto her gladly." Then

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spake the Invisible: "Foolish man! pronounce the three mystic syllables." And he pronounced them; and the Brahmani, as if awaking from a dream, unclosed her jewel-eyes, and wound her round arms about her husband's neck, and with her fresh lips drank the rain of his tears as the lips of a blossom drink in the dews of the night.

So, having eaten of fruits and refreshed themselves, both proceeded upon their way; and at last, leaving the forest, they came to a great stretch of gardens lying without a white city — gardens rainbow-colored with flowers of marvelous perfume, and made cool by fountains flowing from the lips of gods in stone and from the trunks of elephants of rock. Then said the loving husband to his Brahmani: "Remain here a little while, thou too sweet one, that I may hasten on to return to thee sooner with fruits and refreshing drink."...

Now in that place of gardens dwelt a youth, employed to draw up water by the turning of a great wheel, and to cleanse the mouths of the fountains; and although a youth, he had been long consumed by one of those maladies that make men tremble with cold beneath a sky of fire, so that there was little of his youthfulness left to him excepting his voice. But with that voice he charmed the hearts of women, as the juggler charms the hooded serpent; and, seeing the wife of the Brahman, he sang that she might hear.

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He sang as the birds sing in the woods in pairing time, as the waters sing that lip the curves of summered banks, as the Apsarases sang in other kalpas; and he sang the songs of Amarou — Amarou, sweetest of all singers, whose soul had passed through a century of transmigrations in the bodies of a hundred fairest women, until he became the world's master in all mysteries of love. And as the Brahmani listened, Kama transpierced her heart with his flower-pointed arrows, so that, approaching the youth, she pressed her lips upon his lips, and murmured, "If thou lovest me not, I die."

Therefore, when the Brahman returned with fruits and drink, she coaxed him that he should share these with the youth, and even prayed him that he should bring the youth along as a traveling companion or as a domestic.

"Behold!" answered the Brahman, "this young man is too feeble to bear hardship; and if he fall by the wayside, I shall not be strong enough to carry him." But the Brahmani answered, "Nay! should he fall, then will I myself carry him in my basket, upon my head"; and the Brahman yielded to her request, although marveling exceedingly. So they all traveled on together.

Now one day, as they were reposing by a deep well, the Brahmani, beholding her husband asleep, pushed him so that he fell into the well; and she departed, taking the youth with her. Soon after

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this had happened, they came to a great city where a famous and holy king lived, who loved all Brahmans and had built them a temple surrounded by rich lands, paying for the land by laying golden elephant-feet in lines round about it. And the cunning Brahmani, when arrested by the toll-collectors and taken before this king — still bearing the sick youth upon her head in a basket — boldly spake to the king, saying: "This, most holy of kings, is my dearest husband, a righteous Brahman, who has met with affliction while performing the good works ordained for such as he; and inasmuch as heirs sought his life, I have concealed him in this basket and brought him hither." Then the king, being filled with compassion, bestowed upon the Brahmani and her pretended husband the revenues of two villages and the freedom thereof, saying: "Thou shalt be henceforth as my sister thou comeliest and truest of women."

But the poor Brahman was not dead; for his good Deva had preserved his life within the well-pit, and certain travelers passing by drew him up and gave him to eat. Thus it happened that he presently came to the same village in which the wicked Brahmani dwelt; and, fearing with an exceeding great fear, she hastened to the king, and said, "Lo! the enemy who seeketh to kill my husband pursueth after us."

Then said the king, "Let him be trampled under foot by the elephants!"

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But the Brahman, struggling in the grasp of the king's men, cried out, with a bitter cry: "O king! art thou indeed called just, who will not hearken to the voice of the accused? This fair but wicked woman is indeed my own wife; ere I be condemned, let her first give back to me that which I gave her!"

And the king bade his men stay their hands. "Give him back," he commanded, in a voice of tempest, "that which belongs to him!"

But the Brahmani protested, saying, "My lord, I have nought which belongs to him." So the king's brow darkened with the frown of a maharajah.

"Give me back," cried the Brahman, "the life which I gave thee, my own life given to thee with the utterance of the three mystic syllables — the half of my own years."

Then, through exceeding fear of the king, she murmured, "Yea, I render it up to thee, the life thou gavest me with the utterance of the three mystic syllables." And fell dead at the king's feet.

Thus the truth was made manifest; and hence the proverb arose:

She for whom I gave up family, home, and even the half of my life, hath abandoned me, the heartless one! What man may put faith in women?

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BAKAWALI

THERE is in the Hindustani language a marvelous tale written by a Moslem, but treating nevertheless of the ancient gods of India, and of the Apsarases and of the Rakshasas. "The Rose of Bakawali" it is called. Therein also may be found many strange histories of fountains filled with magical waters, changing the sex of those who bathe therein; and histories of flowers created by witchcraft — never fading — whose perfumes give sight to the blind; and, above all, this history of love human and superhuman, for which a parallel may not be found. . . .

. . . IN days when the great Rajah Zainu'l-Mulk reigned over the eastern kingdoms of Hindostan, it came to pass that Bakawali, the Apsaras, fell in love with a mortal youth who was none other than the son of the Rajah. For the lad was beautiful as a girl, beautiful even as the god Kama, and seemingly created for love. Now in that land all living things are sensitive to loveliness, even the plants themselves — like the Asoka that bursts into odorous blossom when touched even by the foot of a comely maiden. Yet was Bakawali fairer than any earthly creature, being a daughter of the immortals; and those who had seen her, believing her born of mortal woman, would answer when interrogated concerning her, "Ask not us! Rather ask thou the nightingale to sing of her beauty."

Never had the youth Taju'l-Mulk guessed that

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his beloved was not of mortal race, having encountered her as by hazard, and being secretly united to her after the Gandharva fashion. But he knew that her eyes were preternaturally large and dark, and the odor of her hair like Tartary musk; and there seemed to transpire from her when she moved such a light and such a perfume that he remained bereft of utterance, while watching her, and immobile as a figure painted upon a wall. And the lamp of love being enkindled in the heart of Bakawali, her wisdom, like a golden moth, consumed itself in the flame thereof, so that she forgot her people utterly, and her immortality, and even the courts of heaven wherein she was wont to dwell.

In the sacred books of the Hindus there is much written concerning the eternal city Amaranagar, whose inhabitants are immortal. There Indra, azure-bearded, dwells in sleepless pleasure, surrounded by his never-slumbering court of celestial bayaderes, circling about him as the constellations of heaven circle in their golden dance about Surya, the sun. And this was Bakawali's home, that she had abandoned for the love of a man.

So it came to pass one night, a night of perfume and of pleasure, that Indra started up from his couch like one suddenly remembering a thing long forgotten, and asked of those about him: "How happens it that Bakawali, daughter of Firoz, no more appears before us?" And one of them made answer,

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saying: "O great Indra, that pretty fish hath been caught in the net of human love! Like the nightingale, never does she cease to complain because it is not possible for her to love even more; intoxicated is she with the perishable youth and beauty of her mortal lover; and she lives only for him and in him, so that even her own kindred are now forgotten or have become to her objects of aversion. And it is because of him, O Lord of Suras and Devas, that the rosy one no longer presents herself before thy court."

Then was Indra wroth; and he commanded that Bakawali be perforce brought before him, that she might render account of her amorous folly. And the Devas, awaking her, placed her in their cloud-chariot, and brought her into the presence of Indra, her lips still humid with mortal kisses, and on her throat red-blossom marks left by human lips. And she knelt before him, with fingers joined as in prayer; while the Lord of the firmament gazed at her in silent anger, with such a frown as he was wont to wear when riding to battle upon his elephant triple-trunked. Then said he to the Devas about him: "Let her be purified by fire, inasmuch as I discern about her an odor of mortality offensive to immortal sense. And even so often as she returns to her folly, so often let her be consumed in my sight."...

Accordingly they bound the fairest of Apsarases, and cast her into a furnace furious as the fires of

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Indra in his Court
From a Fifteenth-Century Jain manuscript

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the sun, so that within a moment her body was changed to a white heap of ashes. But over the ashes was magical water sprinkled; and out of the furnace Bakawali arose, nude as one newly born, but more perfect in rosy beauty even than before. And Indra commanded her to dance before him, as she was wont to do in other days.

So she danced all those dances known in the courts of heaven, curving herself as flowers curve under a perfumed breeze, as water serpentines under the light; and she circled before them rapidly as a leaf-whirling wind, lightly as a bee, with myriad variations of delirious grace, with ever-shifting enchantment of motion, until the hearts of all who looked upon her were beneath those shining feet, and all cried aloud: "O flower-body! O rose-body! O marvel of the Garden of Grace! Blossom of daintiness! O flower-body!"

Thus was she each night obliged to appear before Indra at Amaranagar, and each night to suffer the fiercest purification of fire, forasmuch as she would not forsake her folly; and each night also did she return to her mortal lover, and take her wonted place beside him without awaking him, having first bathed her in the great fountain of rosewater within the court.

But once it happened that Taju'l-Mulk awoke in the night, and reaching out his arms found she was not there. Only the perfume of her head upon the

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pillow, and odorous garments flung in charming formlessness upon every divan....

When she returned, seemingly fairer than before, the youth uttered no reproach, but on the night following he slit up the tip of his finger with a sharp knife, and filled the wound with salt that he might not sleep. Then, when the aerial chariot descended all noiselessly, like some long cloud moon-silvered, he arose and followed Bakawali unperceived. Clinging underneath the chariot, he was borne above winds even to Amaranagar, and into the jeweled courts and into the presence of Indra. But Indra knew not, for his senses were dizzy with sights of beauty and the fumes of soma-wine.

Then did Taju'l-Mulk, standing in the shadow of a pillar, behold beauty such as he had never before seen — save in Bakawali — and hear music sweeter than mortal musician may ever learn. Splendors bewildered his eyes; and the crossing of the fretted and jeweled archwork above him seemed an intercrossing and interblending of innumerable rainbows. But when it was given to him, all unexpectedly, to view the awful purification of Bakawali, his heart felt like ice within him, and he shrieked. Nor could he have refrained from casting himself also into that burst of white fire, had not the magical words been pronounced and the wizard-water sprinkled before he was able to move a limb. Then did he behold Bakawali rising from her snowy cinders — shining like an image of the goddess Lakshmi in the fairest

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of her thousand forms — more radiant than before, like some comet returning from the embraces of the sun with brighter curves of form and longer glories of luminous hair....

And Bakawali danced and departed, Taju'l-Mulk likewise returning even as he had come....

But when he told her, in the dawn of the morning, that he had accompanied her in her voyage and had surprised her secret, Bakawali wept and trembled for fear. "Alas! alas! what hast thou done?" she sobbed; "thou hast become thine own greatest enemy. Never canst thou know all that I have suffered for thy sake — the maledictions of my kindred, the insults of all belonging to my race. Yet rather than turn away my face from thy love, I suffered nightly the agonies of burning; I have died a myriad deaths rather than lose thee. Thou hast seen it with thine own eyes!... But none of mankind may visit unbidden the dwelling of the gods and return with impunity. Now, alas! the evil hath been done; nor can I devise any plan by which to avert thy danger, save that of bringing thee again secretly to Amaranagar and charming Indra in such wise that he may pardon all."...

So Bakawali the Apsaras suffered once more the agony of fire, and danced before the gods, not only as she had danced before, but so that the eyes of all beholding her became dim in watching the varying

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curves of her limbs, the dizzy speed of her white feet, the tossing light of her hair. And the charm of her beauty bewitched the tongues of all there, so that the cry, "O flower-body!" fainted into indistinguishable whispers, and the fingers of the musicians were numbed with languor, and the music weakened tremblingly, quiveringly, dying down into an amorous swoon.

And out of the great silence broke the soft thunder of Indra's pleased voice: "O Bakawali! ask me for whatever thou wilt, and it shall be accorded thee. By the Trimurti, I swear!"... But she, kneeling before him, with bosom still fluttering from the dance, murmured: "I pray thee, divine One, only that thou wilt allow me to depart hence, and dwell with this mortal whom I love during all the years of life allotted unto him." And she gazed upon the youth Taju'l-Mulk.

But Indra, hearing these words, and looking also at Taju'l-Mulk, frowned so darkly that gloom filled all the courts of heaven. And he said: "Thou, also, son of man, wouldst doubtless make the same prayer; yet think not thou mayst take hence an Apsaras like Bakawali to make her thy wife without grief to thyself! And as for thee, O shameless Bakawali, thou mayst depart with him, indeed, since I have sworn; but I swear also to thee that from thy waist unto thy feet thou shalt remain a woman of marble for the space of twelve years.... Now let thy lover rejoice in thee!"...

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. . . And Bakawali was placed in the chamber of a ruined pagoda, deep-buried within the forests of Ceylon; and there did she pass the years, sitting upon a seat of stone, herself stone from feet to waist. But Taju'l-Mulk found her and ministered unto her as to the statue of a goddess; and he waited for her through the long years.

The ruined pavement, grass-disjointed, trembled to the passing tread of wild elephants; often did tigers peer through the pillared entrance, with eyes flaming like emeralds; but Taju'l-Mulk was never weary nor afraid, and he waited by her through all the weary and fearful years.

Gem-eyed lizards clung and wondered; serpents watched with marvelous chrysolite gaze; vast spiders wove their silvered lace above the head of the human statue; sunset-feathered birds, with huge and flesh-colored beaks, hatched their young in peace under the eyes of Bakawali. . . . Until it came to pass at the close of the eleventh year — Taju'l-Mulk being in search of food — that the great ruin fell, burying the helpless Apsaras under a ponderous and monstrous destruction beyond the power of any single arm to remove. . . . Then Taju'l-Mulk wept; but he still waited, knowing that the immortals could not die.

And out of the shapeless mass of ruins there soon grew a marvelous tree, graceful, dainty, round-limbed like a woman; and Taju'l-Mulk watched it waxing tall under the mighty heat of the summer,

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bearing flowers lovelier than that narcissus whose blossoms have been compared to the eyes of Oriental girls, and rosy fruit as smooth-skinned as maiden flesh.

So the twelfth year passed. And with the passing of its last moon, a great fruit parted itself, and therefrom issued the body of a woman, slender and exquisite, whose supple limbs had been folded up within the fruit as a butterfly is folded up within its chrysalis, comely as an Indian dawn, deeper-eyed than ever woman of earth — being indeed an immortal, being an Apsaras — Bakawali reincarnated for her lover, and relieved from the malediction of the gods.

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NATALIKA

THE story of a statue of sable stone among the ruins of Tirouvicaray, which are in the Land of Golconda that was.... When the body shall have mouldered even as the trunk of a dead tree, shall have crumbled to dust even as a clod of earth, the lovers of the dead will turn away their faces and depart; but Virtue, remaining faithful, will lead the soul beyond the darknesses....

THE yellow jungle-grasses are in the streets of the city; the hooded serpents are coiled about the marble legs of the gods. Bats suckle their young within the ears of the granite elephants; and the hairy spider spins her web for ruby-throated humming-birds within the chambers of kings. The pythons breed within the sanctuaries, once ornate as the love-songs of Indian poets; the diamond eyes of the gods have been plucked out; lizards nestle in the lips of Siva; the centipedes writhe among the friezes; the droppings of birds whiten the altars.... But the sacred gateway of a temple still stands, as though preserved by the holiness of its inscriptions:

The Self-existent is not of the universe.... Man may not take with him aught of his possessions beyond the grave; let him increase the greatness of his good deeds, even as the white ants do increase the height of their habitation. For neither father nor mother, neither sister nor brother, neither son nor wife, may accompany him to the other world; but Virtue only may be his comrade....

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And these words, graven upon the stone, have survived the wreck of a thousand years.

Now, among the broken limbs of the gods, and the jungle grasses, and the monstrous creeping plants that seem striving to strangle the elephants of stone, a learned traveler wandering in recent years came upon the statue of a maiden, in black granite, marvelously wrought. Her figure was nude and supple as those of the women of Krishna; on her head was the tiara of a princess, and from her joined hands escaped a cascade of flowers to fall upon the tablet supporting her exquisite feet. And on the tablet was the name NATALIKA; and above it a verse from the holy Ramayana, which signifies, in our tongue, these words:

...For I have been witness of this marvel, that by crushing the flowers in her hands, she made them to exhale a sweeter perfume.

And this is the story of Natalika, as it is told in the chronicle of the Moslem historian Ferista:

More than a thousand years ago there was war between the Khalif Oualed and Dir-Rajah, of the Kingdom of Sindh. The Arab horsemen swept over the land like a typhoon; and their eagle-visaged hordes reddened the rivers with blood, and made the nights crimson with the burning of cities. Brahmanabad they consumed with fire, and Alan and Dinal, making captives of the women, and

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putting all males to the edge of the scimitar. The Rajah fought stoutly for his people and for his gods; but the Arabs prevailed, fearing nothing, remembering the words of the Prophet, that "Paradise may be found in the shadow of the crossing of swords." And at Brahmanabad, Kassim, the zealous lieutenant of the Khalif, captured the daughter of the Rajah, and slew the Rajah and all his people.

Her name was Natalika. When Kassim saw her, fairer than that Love-goddess born from a lotus-flower, her eyes softer than dew, her figure lithe as reeds, her blue-black tresses rippling to the gold rings upon her ankles — he swore by the Prophet's beard that she was the comeliest ever born of woman, and that none should have her save the Khalif Oualed. So he commanded that a troop of picked horsemen should take her to Bagdad, with much costly booty — jewelry, delicate and light as feathers, ivory carving miraculously wrought (sculptured balls within sculptured balls), emeralds and turquoises, diamonds and rubies, woofs of cashmere, and elephants, and dromedaries. And whosoever might do hurt to Natalika by the way, would have to pay for it with his head, as surely as the words of the Koran were the words of God's Prophet.

When Natalika came into the presence of the Khalif of Bagdad, the Commander of the Faithful could at first scarcely believe his eyes, seeing so

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beautiful a maiden; and starting from his throne without so much as looking at the elephants and the jewels and the slaves and the other gifts of Kassim, he raised the girl from her knees and kissed her in the presence of all the people, vowing that it rather behooved him to kneel before her than her to kneel before him. But she only wept, and answered not....

And before many days the Khalif bade her know that he desired to make her his favorite wife; for since his eyes had first beheld her he could neither eat nor sleep for thinking of her. Therefore he prayed that she would cease her weeping, inasmuch as he would do more to make her happy than any other might do, save only the Prophet in his paradise.

Then Natalika wept more bitterly than before, and vowed herself unworthy to be the bride of the Khalif, although herself a king's daughter; for Kassim had done her a grievous wrong ere sending her to Bagdad....

Oualed heard the tale, and his mustaches curled with wrath. He sent his swiftest messengers to India with a sealed parchment containing orders that Kassim should leave the land of Sindh forthwith and hasten to Bassora, there to await further commands. Natalika shut herself up alone in her chamber to weep; and the Khalif wondered that he could not comfort her. But Kassim, leaving Sindh,

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wondered much more why the Commander of the Faithful should have recalled him, notwithstanding the beauty of the gifts, the loveliness of the captives, the splendor of the elephants. Still marveling, he rode into Bassora, and sought the governor of that place. Even while he was complaining there came forth mutes with bow-strings, and they strangled Kassim at the governor's feet.

Days went and came; and at last there rode into Bagdad a troop of fierce horsemen, to the Khalif's palace. Their leader, advancing into Oualed's presence, saluted him, and laid at his feet a ghastly head with blood-bedabbled beard, the head of the great captain, Kassim.

"Lo!" cried Oualed to Natalika, "I have avenged thy wrong; and now, I trust, thou wilt believe that I love thee, and truly desire to set thee over my household as my wife, my queen, my sweetly beloved!"

But Natalika commenced to laugh with a wild and terrible laugh. "Know, O deluded one," she cried, "that Kassim was wholly innocent in that whereof I accused him, and that I sought only to avenge the death of my people, the murder of my brothers and sisters, the pillage of our homes, the sacrilegious destruction of the holy city Brahmanabad. Never shall I, the daughter of a Kshatrya king, ally myself with one of thy blood and creed.

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I have lived so long only that I might be avenged; and now that I am doubly avenged, by the death of our enemy, by thy hopeless dream of love for me, I die!" Piercing her bosom with a poniard, she fell at the Khalif's feet.

But Natalika's betrothed lover, Udayah-Rajah, avenged her even more, driving the circumcised conquerors from the land, and slaughtering all who fell into his hands. And the cruelties they had wrought he repaid them a hundred-fold.

Yet, growing weary of life by reason of Natalika's death, he would not reign upon the throne to which he had hoped to lift her in the embrace of love; but, retiring from the world, he became a holy mendicant of the temple of Tirouvicaray. . . .

And at last, feeling his end near, he dug himself a little grave under the walls of the temple; and ordered the most skilful sculptors to make the marble statue of his beloved, and that the statue should be placed upon his grave. Thus they wrought Natalika's statue as the statues of goddesses are wrought, but always according to his command, so that she seemeth to be crushing roses in her fingers. And when Udayah-Rajah passed away, they placed the statue of Natalika above him, so that her feet rest upon his heart.

I have been witness of this marvel, that by crushing the flowers within her hands she made them to exhale a sweeter perfume!

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Were not those flowers the blossoming of her beautiful youth, made lovelier by its own sacrifice?

The temple and its ten thousand priests are gone. But even after the lapse of a thousand years a perfume still exhales from those roses of stone!

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THE CORPSE-DEMON

THERE is a book written in the ancient tongue of India, and called "Vetálapanchavinsati," signifying "The Twenty-Five Tales of a Demon."... And these tales are marvelous above all stories told by men; for wondrous are the words of Demons, and everlasting.... Now this Demon dwelt within a corpse, and spake with the tongue of the corpse, and gazed with the eyes of the corpse. And the corpse was suspended by its feet from a tree overshadowing tombs....

Now on the fourteenth of the moonless half of the month Bhadon, the Kshatrya king Vikramaditya was commanded by a designing Yogi that he should cut down the corpse and bring the same to him. For the Yogi thus designed to destroy the king in the night....

And when the king cut down the corpse, the Demon which was in the corpse laughed and said: "If thou shouldst speak once upon the way, I go not with thee, but return unto my tree." Then the Demon began to tell to the king stories so strange that he could not but listen. And at the end of each story the Demon would ask hard questions, threatening to devour Vikramaditya should he not answer; and the king, rightly answering, indeed avoided destruction, yet, by speaking, perforce enabled the Demon to return to the tree.... Now listen to one of those tales which the Demon told:

O KING, there once was a city called Dharmpur, whose rajah Dharmshil built a glorious temple to Devi, the goddess with a thousand shapes and a thousand names. In marble was the statue of the goddess wrought, so that she appeared seated cross-

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legged upon the cup of a monstrous lotus, two of her four hands being joined in prayer, and the other two uplifting on either side of her fountain basins, in each of which stood an elephant spouting perfumed spray. And there was exceeding great devotion at this temple; and the people never wearied of presenting to the goddess sandal-wood, unbroken rice, consecrated food, flowers, and lamps burning odorous oil.

Now from a certain city there came one day in pilgrimage to Devi's temple, a washerman and a friend with him. Even as he was ascending the steps of the temple, he beheld a damsel descending toward him, unrobed above the hips, after the fashion of her people. Sweet as the moon was her face; her hair was like a beautiful dark cloud; her eyes were liquid and large as a wild deer's; her brows were arched like bows well bent; her delicate nose was curved like a falcon's beak; her neck was comely as a dove's; her teeth were like pomegranate seeds; her lips ruddy as the crimson gourd; her hands and feet soft as lotus-leaves. Golden-yellow was her skin, like the petals of the champa-flowers; and the pilgrim saw that she was graceful-waisted as a leopard. And while the tinkling of the gold rings about her round ankles receded beyond his hearing, his sight became dim for love, and he prayed his friend to discover for him who the maiden might be.... Now she was the daughter of a washerman.

Then did the pilgrim enter into the presence of

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the goddess, having his mind filled wholly by the vision of that girl; and prostrating himself he vowed a strange vow, saying: "O Devi, Mahadevi — Mother of Gods and Monster-slayer — before whom all the divinities bow down, thou hast delivered the earth from its burdens! thou hast delivered those that worshiped thee from a thousand misfortunes! Now I pray thee, O Mother Devi, that thou wilt be my helper also, and fulfill the desire of my heart. And if by thy favor I be enabled to marry that loveliest of women, O Devi, verily I will make a sacrifice of my own head to thee." Such was the vow which he vowed.

But having returned unto his city and to his home, the torment of being separated from his beloved so wrought upon him that he became grievously sick, knowing neither sleep nor hunger nor thirst, inasmuch as love causes men to forget all these things. And it seemed that he might shortly die. Then, indeed, his friend, being alarmed, went to the father of the youth, and told him all, so that the father also became fearful for his son. Therefore, accompanied by his son's friend, he went to that city, and sought out the father of the girl, and said to him: "Lo! I am of thy caste and calling, and I have a favor to ask of thee. It has come to pass that my son is so enamoured of thy daughter that unless she be wedded to him he will surely die. Give me, therefore, the hand of thy daughter for my dear son." And the other was not at all displeased at

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these words; but, sending for a Brahman, he decided upon a day of good omen for the marriage to be celebrated. And he said: "Friend, bring thy son hither. I shall rub her hands with turmeric, that all men may know she is betrothed."

Thus was the marriage arranged; and in due time the father of the youth came with his son to the city; and after the ceremony had been fulfilled, he returned to his own people with his son and his daughter-in-law. Now the love these young people held each for the other waxed greater day by day; and there was no shadow on the young man's happiness saving the memory of his vow. But his wife so caressed and fondled him that at last the recollection of the oath faded utterly away.

After many days it happened that the husband and wife were both invited to a feast at Dharmpur; and they went thither with the friend who had before accompanied the youth upon his pilgrimage. Even as they neared the city, they saw from afar off the peaked and gilded summits of Devi's temple. Then the remembrance of his oath came back with great anguish to that young husband. "Verily," he thought within his heart, "I am most shameless and wicked among all perjurers, having been false in my vow even to Devi, Mother of Gods!"

And he said to his friend: "I pray thee, remain thou here with my wife while I go to prostrate myself before Devi."

So he departed to the temple, and bathed himself

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in the sacred pool, and bowed himself before the statue with joined hands. And having performed the rites ordained, he struck himself with a sword a mighty blow upon his neck, so that his head, being separated from his body, rolled even to the pillared stem of the marble lotus upon which Devi sat.

Now after the wife and the dead man's friend had long waited vainly, the friend said: "Surely he hath been gone a great time; remain thou here while I go to bring him back!" So he went to the temple, and entering it beheld his friend's body lying in blood, and the severed head beneath the feet of Devi. And he said to his own heart: "Verily this world is hard to live in!... Should I now return, the people would say that I had murdered this man for the sake of his wife's exceeding beauty." Therefore he likewise bathed in the sacred pool, and performed the rites prescribed, and smote himself upon the neck so that his head also was severed from his body and rolled in like manner unto Devi's feet.

Now, after the young wife had waited in vain alone for a long while, she became much tormented by fear for her husband's sake, and went also to the temple. And when she beheld the corpses and the reeking swords, she wept with unspeakable anguish, and said to her own heart: "Surely this world is hard to live in at best; and what is life now worth to me without my husband? Moreover, people will say that I, being a wicked woman, murdered them

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both, in order to live wickedly without restraint. Let me therefore also make a sacrifice!"...

Saying these words, she departed to the sacred pool and bathed therein, and, having performed the holy rites, lifted a sword to her own smooth throat that she might slay herself. But even as she lifted the sword a mighty hand of marble stayed her arm; while the deep pavement quivered to the tread of Devi's feet. For the Mother of Gods had arisen, and descended from her lotus seat, and stood beside her. And a divine voice issued from the grim lips of stone, saying, "O daughter! Dear hast thou made thyself to me! Ask now a boon of Devi!" But she answered, all-tremblingly, "Divinest Mother, I pray only that these men may be restored to life." Then said the goddess, "Put their heads upon their bodies."

And the beautiful wife sought to do according to the divine command; but love and hope and the fear of Devi made dizzy her brain, so that she placed her husband's head upon the friend's neck, and the head of the friend upon the neck of her husband. And the goddess sprinkled the bodies with the nectar of immortality, and they stood up, alive and well, indeed, yet with heads wonderfully exchanged.

Then said the Demon: "O King Vikramaditya! to which of these two was she wife? Verily, if thou dost not rightly answer, I shall devour thee." And Vikramaditya answered: "Listen! in the holy Shastra it is said that as the Ganges is chief among rivers, and Sumeru chief

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among mountains, and the Tree of Paradise chief among trees, so is the head chief among the parts of the body. Therefore she was the wife of that one to whose body her husband's head was joined."... Having answered rightly, the king suffered no hurt; but inasmuch as he had spoken, it was permitted the corpse-demon to return to the tree, and hang suspended therefrom above the tombs.

...And many times, in like manner, was the Demon enabled to return to the tree; and even so many times did Vikramaditya take down and bind and bear away the Demon; and each time the Demon would relate to the king a story so wild, so wonderful, that he could not choose but hear.... Now this is another of those tales which the Demon told:

O KING, in the city of Dharmasthal there lived a Brahman, called Kesav; and his daughter, who was beautiful as an Apsaras, had rightly been named Sweet Jasmine-Flower, Madhumalati. And so soon as she was nubile, her father and her mother and her brothers were all greatly anxious to find her a worthy husband.

Now one day the father and the brother and the mother of the girl each promised her hand to a different suitor. For the good Kesav, while absent upon a holy visit, met a certain Brahman youth, who so pleased him that Kesav promised him Madhumalati; and even the same day, the brother, who was a student of the Shastras, met at the house of his spiritual teacher another student who so pleased him that he promised him Madhumalati; and in the meantime there visited Kesav's home another young Brahman, who so delighted the

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mother that she promised him Madhumalati. And the three youths thus betrothed to the girl were all equal in beauty, in strength, in accomplishments, and even in years, so that it would not have been possible to have preferred any one of them above the rest. Thus, when the father returned home, he found the three youths there before him; and he was greatly troubled upon learning all that had taken place. "Verily," he exclaimed, "there is but one girl and three bridegrooms, and to all of the three has our word been pledged; to whom shall I give Madhumalati?" And he knew not what to do.

But even as he was thinking, and gazing from one to the other of the three youths, a hooded serpent bit the girl, so that she died.

Forthwith the father sent out for magicians and holy men, that they might give back life to his daughter; and the holy men came together with the magicians. But the enchanters said that, by reason of the period of the moon, it was not possible for them to do aught; and the holy men avowed that even Brahma himself could not restore life to one bitten by a serpent. With sore lamentation, accordingly, the Brahman performed the funeral rites; and a pyre was built, and the body of Madhumalati consumed thereupon.

Now those three youths had beheld the girl in her living beauty, and all of them had been madly enamoured of her; and each one, because he had loved and lost her, resolved thenceforth to abandon

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the world and forego all pleasure in this life. All visited the funeral pyre; and one of them gathered up all the girl's bones while they were yet warm from the flame, and tied them within a bag, and then went his way to become a fakir. Another collected the ashes of her body, and took them with him into the recesses of a forest, where he built a hut and began to live alone with the memory of her. The last indeed took no relic of Madhumalati, but, having prayed a prayer, assumed the garb of a Yogi, and departed to beg his way through the world. Now his name was Madhusudam.

Long after these things had happened, Madhusudam one day entered the house of a Brahman, to beg for alms; and the Brahman invited him to partake of the family repast. So Madhusudam, having washed his hands and his feet, sate him down to eat beside the Brahman; and the Brahman's wife waited upon them. Now it came to pass, when the meal was still but half served, that the Brahman's little boy asked for food; and being bidden to wait, he clung to the skirt of his mother's dress, so that she was hindered in her duties of hospitality. Becoming angry, therefore, she seized her boy, and threw him into the fireplace where a great fire was; and the boy was burned to ashes in a moment. But the Brahman continued to eat as if nothing had happened; and his wife continued to serve the repast with a kindly smile upon her countenance.

And being horror-stricken at these sights, Mad-

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husudam arose from his sitting-place, leaving his meal unfinished, and directed his way toward the door. Then the Brahman kindly questioned him, saying: "O friend, how comes it that thou dost not eat? Surely both I and my wife have done what we could to please thee!"

And Madhusudam, astonished and wroth, answered: "How dost thou dare ask me why I do not eat? How might any being, excepting a Rakshasa, eat in the house of one by whom such a demon-deed hath been committed?"

But the Brahman smiled, and rose up and went to another part of the house, and returned speedily with a book of incantations — a book of the science of resurrection. And he read but one incantation therefrom, when, lo! the boy that had been burned came alive and unscorched from the fire, and ran to his mother, crying and clinging to her dress as before.

Then Madhusudam thought within himself: "Had I that wondrous book, how readily might I restore my beloved to life!" And he sat down again, and, having finished his repast, remained in that house as a guest. But in the middle of the night he arose stealthily, and purloined the magical book, and fled away to his own city.

And after many days he went upon a pilgrimage of love to the place where the body of Madhumalati had been burned (for it was the anniversary of her death), and arriving he found that the other two who had been betrothed to her were also there be-

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fore him. And lifting up their voices, they cried out: "O Madhusudam! thou hast been gone many years and hast seen much. What hast thou learned of science?"

But he answered: "I have learned the science that restores the dead to life." Then they prayed him, saying, "Revive thou Madhumalati!" And he told them: "Gather ye her bones together, and her ashes, and I will give her life."

And they having so done, Madhusudam produced the book and read a charm therefrom; and the heap of ashes and cindered bones shaped itself to the command, and changed color, and lived, and became a beautiful woman, sweet as a jasmine-flower — Madhumalati even as she was before the snake had bitten her!

But the three youths, beholding her smile, were blinded by love, so that they began to wrangle fiercely together for the sake of her....

Then the Demon said: "O Vikramaditya! to which of these was she wife? Answer rightly, lest I devour thee."

And the king answered: "Truly she was the wife of him who had collected her ashes, and taken them with him into the recesses of the forest, where he built a hut and dwelt alone with the memory of her."

"Nay!" said the Demon; "how could she have been restored to life had not the other also preserved her bones? and despite the piety of those two, how could she have been resurrected but for the third?"

But the king replied: "Even as the son's duty is to preserve the bones of his parents, so did he who preserved

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the bones of Madhumalati stand to her only in the place of a son. Even as a father giveth life, so did he who reanimated Madhumalati stand to her only in the place of a father. But he who collected her ashes and took them with him into the recesses of the forest, where he built a hut and dwelt alone with the memory of her, he was truly her lover and rightful husband."

...Many other hard questions the Demon also asked, concerning men who by magic turned themselves into women, and concerning corpses animated by evil spirits; but the king answered all of them save one, which indeed admitted of no answer:

O Vikramaditya, when Mahabal was rajah of Dharmpur, another monarch strove against him, and destroyed his army in a great battle, and slew him. And the wife and daughter of the dead king fled to the forest for safety, and wandered there alone. At that time the rajah Chandrasen was hunting in the forest, and his son with him; and they beheld the prints of women's feet upon the ground. Then said Chandrasen: "Surely the feet of those who have passed here are delicate and beautiful, like those of women; yet I marvel exceedingly that there should be women in this desolate place. Let us pursue after them; and if they be beautiful, I shall take to wife her whose feet have made the smallest of these tracks, and thou shalt wed the other."

So they came up with the women, and were much charmed with their beauty; and the rajah Chan-

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drasen married the daughter of the dead Mahabal, and Chandrasen's son took Mahabal's widow to wife. So that the father married the daughter of the mother, and the son the mother of the daughter. . . .

And the Demon asked: "O Vikramaditya, in what manner were the children of Chandrasen and his son related by these marriages?" But the king could not answer. And because he remained silent the Demon was pleased, and befriended him in a strange and unexpected manner, as it is written in the "Vetálapanchavinsati."

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THE LION

INTELLIGENCE is better than much learning; intelligence is better than science; the man that hath not intelligence shall perish like those who made unto themselves a lion. . . . And this is the story of the lion, as related by the holy Brahman Vishnousarman in the "Panchopakhyana."

IN days of old there were four youths of the Brahman caste — brothers, who loved each other with strong affection, and had resolved to travel all together into a neighboring empire to seek fortune and fame.

Of these four brothers three had deeply studied all sciences, knowing magic, astronomy, alchemy, and occult arts most difficult to learn; while the fourth had no knowledge whatever of science, possessing intelligence only.

Now, as they were traveling together, one of the learned brothers observed: "Why should a brother without knowledge obtain profit by our wisdom? Traveling with us he can be only a burden upon us. Never will he be able to obtain the respect of kings, and therefore must he remain a disgrace to us. Rather let him return home."

But the eldest of all answered: "Nay! let him share our good luck; for he is our loving brother, and we may perhaps find some position for him which he can fill without being a disgrace to us."

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So they journeyed along; and after a time, while passing through a forest, they beheld the bones of a lion scattered on the path. These bones were white as milk and hard as flint, so dry and so bleached they were.

Then said he who had first condemned the ignorance of his brother: "Let us now show our brother what science may accomplish; let us put his ignorance to shame by giving life to these lion-bones, and creating another lion from them! By a few magical words I can summon the dry bones together, making each fit into its place." Therewith he spake the words, so that the dry bones came together with a clattering sound — each fitting to its socket — and the skeleton rejointed itself together.

"I," quoth the second brother, "can by a few words spread tendons over the bones — each in its first place — and thicken them with muscle, and redden them with blood, and create the humors, the veins, the glands, the marrow, the internal organs, and the exterior skin." Therewith he spake the words; and the body of the lion appeared upon the ground at their feet, perfect, shaggy, huge.

"And I," said the third brother, "can by one word give warmth to the blood and motion to the heart, so that the animal shall live and breathe and devour beasts. And ye shall hear him roar."

But ere he could utter the word, the fourth brother, who knew nothing about science, placed his hand over his mouth. "Nay!" he cried, "do

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not utter the word. That is a lion! If thou givest him life, he will devour us."

But the others laughed him to scorn, saying: "Go home, thou fool! What dost thou know of science?"

Then he answered them: "At least, delay the making of the lion until thy brother can climb up this tree." Which they did.

But hardly had he ascended the tree when the word was spoken, and the lion moved and opened his great yellow eyes. Then he stretched himself, and arose, and roared. Then he turned upon the three wise men, and slew them, and devoured them.

But after the lion had departed, the youth who knew nothing of science descended from the tree unharmed, and returned to his home.

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THE LEGEND OF THE MONSTER MISFORTUNE

He that hath a hundred desireth a thousand; he that hath a thousand would have a hundred thousand; he that hath a hundred thousand longeth for the kingdom; he that hath a kingdom doth wish to possess the heavens. And being led astray by cupidity, even the owners of riches and wisdom do those things which should never be done, and seek after that which ought never to be sought after.... Wherefore there hath been written, for the benefit of those who do nourish their own evil passions, this legend taken from the forty-sixth book of the "Fa-youen-tchou-lin":

In those ages when the sun shone brighter than in these years, when the perfumes of flowers were sweeter, when the colors of the world were fairer to behold, and gods were wont to walk upon earth, there was a certain happy kingdom wherein no misery was. Of gems and of gold there was superabundance; the harvests were inexhaustible as ocean; the cities more populous than ant-hills. So many years had passed without war that plants grew upon the walls of the great towns, disjointing the rampart-stones by the snaky strength of their roots. And through all that land there was a murmur of music constant as the flow of the Yellow River; sleep alone interrupted the pursuit of pleasure, and even the dreams of sleepers were never

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darkened by imaginary woe. For there was no sickness and no want of any sort, so that each man lived his century of years, and dying laid him down painlessly, as one seeking repose after pleasure — the calm of slumber after the intoxication of joy.

One day the king of that country called all his counselors and ministers and chief mandarins together, and questioned them, saying: "Behold! I have read in certain ancient annals which are kept within our chief temple, these words: '*In days of old Misfortune visited the land.*' Is there among you one who can tell me what manner of creature Misfortune is? Unto what may Misfortune be likened?"

But all the counselors and the ministers and the mandarins answered: "O king, we have never beheld it, nor can we say what manner of creature it may be."

Thereupon the king ordered one of his ministers to visit all the lesser kingdoms, and to inquire what manner of creature Misfortune might be, and to purchase it at any price — if indeed it could be bought — though the price should be the value of a province.

Now there was a certain god, who, seeing and hearing these things, forthwith assumed the figure of a man, and went to the greatest market of a neighboring kingdom, taking with him Misfortune, chained with a chain of iron. And the form of Misfortune was the form of a gigantic sow. So the

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minister, visiting that foreign market, observed the creature, which was made fast to a pillar there, and asked the god what animal it was.

"It is called the female of Misfortune," quoth the god.

"Is it for sale?" questioned the minister.

"Assuredly," answered the god.

"And the price?"

"A million pieces of gold."

"What is its daily food?"

"One bushel measure of needles."

Having paid for the beast a million pieces of good yellow gold, the minister was perforce compelled to procure food for it. So he sent out runners to all the markets, and to the shops of tailors and of weavers, and to all the mandarins of all districts within the kingdom, to procure needles. This caused much tribulation in the land, not only by reason of the scarcity of needles, but also because of the affliction to which the people were subjected. For those who had not needles were beaten with bamboos; and the mandarins, desiring to obey the behest of the king's minister, exercised much severity. The tailors and others who lived by their needles soon found themselves in a miserable plight; and the needlemakers, toil as they would, could never make enough to satisfy the hunger of the beast, although many died because of overwork. And the price of a needle became as the price of emeralds and diamonds, and

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the rich gave all their substance to procure food for this beast, whose mouth, like the mouth of hell, could not be satisfied. Then the people in many parts, made desperate by hunger and the severity of the mandarins, rose in revolt, provoking a war which caused the destruction of many tens of thousands. The rivers ran with blood, yet the minister could not bring the beast to the palace for lack of needles wherewith to feed it.

Therefore he wrote at last to the king, saying: "I have indeed been able to find and to buy the female of Misfortune; but the male I have not been able to obtain, nor, with Your Majesty's permission, will I seek for it. Lo! the female hath already devoured the substance of this land; and I dare not attempt to bring such a monster to the palace. I pray Your Majesty therefore that Your Majesty graciously accord me leave to destroy this hideous beast; and I trust that Your Majesty will bear in mind the saying of the wise men of India: 'Even a King who will not hearken to advice should be advised by faithful counselors.'"

Then the king, being already alarmed by noise of the famine and of the revolution, ordered that the beast should be destroyed.

Accordingly, the female of Misfortune was led to a desolate place without the village, and chained fast with chains of iron; and the minister commanded the butchers to kill it. But so impenetrable

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was its skin that neither axe nor knife could wound it. Wherefore the soldiers were commanded to destroy it. But the arrows of the archers flattened their steel points upon Misfortune, even when directed against its eyes, which were bright and hard as diamonds; while swords and spears innumerable were shattered and broken in foolish efforts to kill it.

Then the minister commanded a great fire to be built; and the monster was bound within the fire, while quantities of pitch and of oil and of resinous woods were poured and piled upon the flame, until the fire became too hot for men to approach it within the distance of ten li. But the beast, instead of burning, first became red-hot and then white-hot, shining like the moon. Its chains melted like wax, so that it escaped at last and ran out among the people like a dragon of fire. Many were thus consumed; and the beast entered the villages and destroyed them; and still running so swiftly that its heat increased with its course, it entered the capital city, and ran through it and over it upon the roofs, burning up even the king in his palace.

Thus, by the folly of that king, was the kingdom utterly wasted and destroyed, so that it became a desert, inhabited only by lizards and serpents and demons....

NOTE. This and the following fable belong to the curious collection translated by M. Stanislas Julien from a Chinese encyclopædia, and published at Paris in 1860,

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under the title, "Les Avadânas" — or "The Similitudes" — a Sanscrit term corresponding to the Chinese Pi-yu, and justified by the origin of the stories, translated by the Chinese themselves, or at least reconstructed, from old Sanscrit texts. I have ventured, however, to accentuate the slightly Chinese coloring of the above grotesque parable. L. H.

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A PARABLE BUDDHISTIC

...LIKE to earthen vessels wrought in a potter's mill, so are the lives of men; howsoever carefully formed, all are doomed to destruction. Nought that exists shall endure; life is as the waters of a river that flow away, but never return. Therefore may happiness only be obtained by concealing the Six Appetites, as the tortoise withdraws its six extremities into its shell; by guarding the thoughts from desire and from grief, even as the city is guarded by its ditches and its walls....

So spoke in gathas Sakya-Mouni. And this parable, doubtless by him narrated of old, and translated from a lost Indian manuscript into the Chinese tongue, may be found in the fifty-first book of the "Fa-youen-tchou-lin":

...A father and his son were laboring together in the field during the season of serpents, and a hooded serpent bit the young man, so that he presently died. For there is no remedy known to man which may annul the venom of the hooded snake, filling the eyes with sudden darkness and stilling the motion of the heart. But the father, seeing his son lying dead, and the ants commencing to gather, returned to his work and ceased not placidly to labor as before.

Then a Brahman passing that way, seeing what had happened, wondered that the father continued

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to toil, and yet more at observing that his eyes were tearless. Therefore he questioned him, asking: "Whose son was that youth who is dead?"

"He was mine own son," returned the laborer, ceasing not to labor.

"Yet, being thy son, how do I find thee tearless and impassive?"

"Folly!" answered the laborer; "even the instant that a man is born into the world, so soon doth he make his first step in the direction of death; and the ripeness of his strength is also the beginning of its decline. For the well-doing there is indeed a recompense; for the wicked there is likewise punishment. What avail, therefore, tears and grief? In no wise can they serve the dead.... Perchance, good Brahman, thou art on thy way to the city. If so, I pray thee to pass by my house, and to tell my wife that my son is dead, so that she may send hither my noonday repast."

"Ah! what manner of man is this?" thought the Brahman to himself. "His son is dead, yet he does not weep; the corpse lies under the sun, yet he ceases not to labor; the ants gather about it, yet he coldly demands his noonday meal! Surely there is no compassion, no human feeling, within his entrails!" These things the Brahman thought to himself; yet, being stirred by curiosity, he proceeded none the less to the house of the laborer, and beholding the mother said unto her: "Woman, thy son is dead, having been stricken by a hooded snake;

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and thy tearless husband bade me tell thee to send him his noonday repast.... And now I perceive thou art also insensible to the death of thy son, for thou dost not weep!"

But the mother of the dead answered him with comparisons, saying: "Sir, that son had indeed received only a passing life from his parents; therefore I called him not my son. Now he hath passed away from me, nor was it in my feeble power to retain him. He was only as a traveler halting at a tavern; the traveler rests and passes on; shall the tavern keeper restrain him? Such is indeed the relation of mother and son. Whether the son go or come, whether he remain or pass on, I have no power over his being; my son has fulfilled the destiny appointed, and from that destiny none could save him. Why, therefore, lament that which is inevitable?"

And wondering still more, the Brahman turned unto the eldest sister of the dead youth, a maiden in the lotus bloom of her maidenhood, and asked her, saying: "Thy brother is dead, and wilt thou not weep?"

But the maiden also answered him with comparisons, saying: "Sometimes a strong woodman enters the forest of trees, and hews them down with mighty axe-strokes, and binds them together into a great raft, and launches the raft into the vast river. But a furious wind arises and excites the waves to dash the raft hither and thither, so that it breaks asunder,

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and the currents separate the foremost logs from those behind, and all are whirled away never again to be united. Even such has been the fate of my young brother. We were bound together by destiny in the one family; we have been separated forever. There is no fixed time of life or death; whether our existence be long or short, we are united only for a period, to be separated forevermore. My brother has ended his allotted career; each of us is following a destiny that may not be changed. To me it was not given to protect and to save him. Wherefore should I weep for that which could not be prevented?"

Then wondering still more, the Brahman addressed himself to the beautiful wife of the dead youth, saying: "And thou, on whose bosom he slept, dost thou not weep for him, thy comely husband, cut off in the summer of his manhood?"

But she answered him also with comparisons, saying: "Even as two birds, flying one from the east and one from the south, meet and look into each other's eyes, and circle about each other, and seek the same summit of tree or temple, and sleep together until the dawn, so was our own fate. When the golden light breaks in the east, the two birds, leaving their temple perch or their tree, fly in opposite ways each to seek its food. They meet again if destiny wills; if not, they never behold each other more. Such was the fate of my husband and myself; when death sought him his destiny was accom-

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plished, and it was not in my power to save him. Therefore, why should I weep?"

Then wondering more than ever, the Brahman questioned the slave of the dead man, asking him: "Thy master is dead; why dost thou not weep?"

But the slave also answered him with comparisons, saying: "My master and I were united by the will of destiny; I was only as the little calf which follows the great bull. The great bull is slain: the little calf could not save him from the axe of the butcher; its cries and bleatings could avail nothing. Wherefore should I weep, not knowing how soon indeed my own hour may come?"

And the Brahman, silent with wonder, watched the slender figures of the women moving swiftly to and fro athwart the glow of golden light from without, preparing the noonday repast for the tearless laborer in the field.

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PUNDARI

A STORY of the Buddha, who filled with light the world, the soles of whose feet were like unto the faces of two blazing suns, for that he trod in the Perfect Paths.

...IN those days Buddha was residing upon the summit of the mountain Gridhrakuta, overlooking that ancient and vanished city called Rajagriha — then a glorious vision of white streets and fretted arcades, and milky palaces so mightily carven that they seemed light as woofs of Cashmere, delicate as frost! There was the cry of elephants heard; there the air quivered with amorous music; there the flowers of a thousand gardens exhaled incense to heaven, and there women sweeter than the flowers moved their braceleted ankles to the notes of harps and flutes....But, above all, the summit of the mountain glowed with a glory greater than day — with a vast and rosy light signaling the presence of the Buddha.

Now in that city dwelt a bayadere, most lovely among women, with whom in grace no other being could compare; and she had become weary of the dance and the jewels and the flowers — weary of her corselets of crimson and golden silk, and her robes light as air, diaphanous as mist — weary, also, of the princes who rode to her dwelling upon elephants, bearing her gifts of jewels and perfumes

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and vessels strangely wrought in countries distant ten years' journey. And her heart whispered her to seek out Buddha, that she might obtain knowledge and rest, becoming even as a Bhikshuni.

Therefore, bidding farewell to the beautiful city, she began to ascend the hilly paths to where the great and rosy glory beamed above. Fierce was the heat of the sun, and rough the dizzy paths; and the thirst and weariness of deserts came upon her. So that, having but half ascended the mountain, she paused to drink and rest at a spring clear and bright like diamond, that had wrought a wondrous basin for itself in the heart of the rock.

But as the bayadere bent above the fountain to drink, she beheld in its silver-bright mirror the black glory of her hair, and the lotus softness of her silky-shadowed eyes, and the rose-budding of her honey-sweet mouth, and her complexion golden as sunlight, and the polished suppleness of her waist, and her slender limbs rounder than an elephant's trunk, and the gold-engirdled grace of her ankles. And a mist of tears gathered before her sight. "Shall I, indeed, cast away this beauty?" she murmured. "Shall I mask this loveliness, that hath allured rajahs and maharajahs, beneath the coarse garb of a recluse? Shall I behold my youth and grace fade away in solitude as dreams of the past? Wherefore, then, should I have been born so beautiful? Nay! let those without grace and without youth abandon all to seek the Five Paths!" And she turned her

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face again toward the white-glimmering Rajagriha, whence ascended the breath of flowers, and the liquid melody of flutes, and the wanton laughter of dancing girls....

But far above, in the rosiness, omniscient Buddha looked into her heart, and, pitying her weakness, changed himself by utterance of the Word into a girl far comelier and yet more lissome than even Pundari the bayadere. So that Pundari, descending, suddenly and in much astonishment became aware of the loveliest of companions at her side, and asked: "O thou fairest one! whence comest thou? Who may the kindred be of one so lovely?"

And the sweet stranger answered, in tones softer than of flutes of gold: "I also, lovely one, am returning to the white city Rajagriha; let us journey together, that we may comfort each other by the way."

And Pundari answered: "Yea, O fairest maiden! thy beauty draws me to thee as the flower the bee, and thy heart must surely be precious as is thy incomparable face!"

So they journeyed on; but the lovely stranger became weary at last, and Pundari, sitting down, made a pillow of her round knees for the dainty head, and kissed her comrade to sleep, and stroked the silky magnificence of her hair, and fondled the ripe beauty of the golden face slumbering, and a great love for the stranger swelled ripening in her heart.

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Yet while she gazed the face upon her smooth knees changed, even as a golden fruit withers and wrinkles, so wizened became the curved cheeks: strange hollows darkened and deepened about the eyes; the silky lashes vanished with their shadows; the splendid hair whitened like the ashes of altar fires; shrunken and shriveled grew the lips; toothless yawned the once rosy mouth; and the bones of the face, made salient, fore-shaped the gibbering outlines of a skull. The perfume of youth was gone; but there arose odors insufferable of death, and with them came the ghastly creeping things that death fattens, and the livid colors and blotches that his shadowy fingers leave. And Pundari, shrieking, fled to the presence of Buddha, and related unto him the things which she had seen.

And the World-Honored comforted her, and spake:

"O Pundari, life is but as the fruit; loveliness but as the flower! Of what use is the fairest body that lieth rotting beside the flowings of the Ganges? Old age and death none of us may escape; yet there are worse than these — the new births which are to this life as the echo to the voice in the cavern, as the great footprints to the steps of the elephant.

"From desire cometh woe; by desire is begotten all evil. The body itself is a creation of the mind only, of the foolish thirst of the heart for pleasure. As the shadows of dreams are dissipated with the awakening of the sleeper, even so shall sorrow vanish

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and evil pass away from the heart of whosoever shall learn to conquer desire and quench the heart's thirst; even so shall the body itself vanish for those who tread well in the Five Paths.

"O Pundari, there is no burning greater than desire; no joy like unto the destruction of the body! Even as the white stork standing alone beside the dried-up lily-pool, so shall those be whose youth passes from them in the fierce heat of foolish passion; and when the great change shall come, they will surely be born again unto foolishness and tears.

"Those only who have found delight in the wilderness where others behold horror; those who have extinguished all longings; those self-made passionless by meditation on life and death — only such do attain to happiness, and, preventing the second birth, enter into the blessedness of Nirvana."...

And the bayadere, cutting off her hair, and casting from her all gifts of trinkets and jewels, abandoned everything to enter the Five Paths. And the Devas, rejoicing, made radiant the mountains above the white city, and filled the air with a rain of strange flowers. And whosoever would know more of Buddha, let him read the marvelous book "Fah-Kheu-King," — the Book "Dhammapada."

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YAMARAJA

THE Legend Maggavago; or, "The Way" — which is in the marvelous book of the "Dhammapada."... A story of the Buddha at whose birth the stars stopped in their courses....

THE Brahman's son was dead — dead in the blossoming of his beautiful youth, as the rose in whose heart a worm is born, as the lotus bud when the waters of the pool are cut off. For comeliness there was none like him, even among the children of the holiest caste; nor were there any so deeply learned in the books of religion, in just reasoning regarding the Scriptures, in the recitation of the slokas of singers divinely inspired. Thrice the aged priest fainted away upon the body of his son; and as often as they would have led him to his home, he shrieked and fainted again, so that, at last, even while he lay as dead, they took the body from his arms, and, having washed it with the waters of purification, wrapped it in perfumed linen, and laid it upon a bier decked with Indian flowers, and bore it away to the place of interment. Thus, when the unhappy father came to himself, all was accomplished; and the stern elders of his caste, gathering about him, so harshly reproved him for his grief that he was perforce compelled to reason with himself regarding the vanity of lamentation and the folly of human tears.

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But not ceasing to meditate upon his great loss, a wild hope at last shaped itself within his heart. "Lo!" he thought, "I have heard it said that certain mighty Brahmans, having acquired the Five Virtues, the Five Faculties, the Ten Forces, were enabled to converse face to face with Yamaraja, the Lord of Death! To me it hath not indeed been given, by reason perchance of my feeble will, to obtain the supreme wisdom; yet my love and faith are of the heart, and I will seek out Yamaraja, King of Death, and pray him to give me back my son." Therefore the Brahman, investing himself with sacerdotal vestments, performed the holy ceremonies ordained in the law; and having offered the sacrifice of flowers and of incense, he departed to seek the Lord of Death, the Maharajah of vanished kingdoms, Yama. And he questioned all whom he met as to where Yama might be found.

Some, opening astounded eyes, answered him not at all, deeming him to be mad; some there were that mocked him; some counseled that he should return home, lest he find Yama too speedily! Kshattrya princes with jewel-hilted sabres answered him as they rode by in glittering steel and glimmering gold: "Yama may be found in the tempest of battles, beneath the bursting of arrow-clouds, amidst the lightning of swords, before the armored ranks of the fighting elephants." Swarthy mariners replied, with rough laughter as of sea winds: "Thou mayst seek

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Yama in the roaring of waters and raving of typhoons; let the spirit of storms answer thee!"... And dancing girls, singing the burning hymn of Ourvasi, paused to answer with their witchery: "Seek Yama rather in our arms, upon our lips, upon our hearts; exhale thy soul in a kiss."... And they laughed shrilly as the bells of the temple eaves laugh when the wind lips their silver tongues.

So he wandered on, by the banks of many rivers, under the shadowing of many city walls, still seeking, until he came to the great wilderness below the mountains of the east, where dwelt the most holy, who had obtained supreme wisdom. Serpents hooded like mendicants protruded their forked tongues; the leopard thrust aside the jungle grasses to gaze at him with eyes of green flame; the boa moved before him, making a waving in the deep weeds as the wake of a boat upon water. But inasmuch as he sought Yama, he could not fear.

Thus he came at last to where the most holy of Brahmans dwelt, who had obtained supreme wisdom, nourishing themselves upon the perfumes of flowers only. The shadow of the rocks, the shadows of the primeval trees, lengthened and shortened and circled with the circling of the sun; but the shadows of the trees beneath which they sat circled not, nor did they change with the changing of the universal light. The eyes of the hermits gazed unwinking upon the face of the sun; the birds of

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heaven nestled in the immobility of their vast beards. All tremblingly he asked of them where Yamaraja might be found.

Long he awaited in silence their answer, hearing only the waters chanting their eternal slokas, the trees whispering with all their flickering leaf-tongues, the humming of innumerable golden flies, the heavy movement of great beasts in the jungle. At last the Brahmans moved their lips, and answered, "Wherefore seekest thou Yama?" And at their utterance the voices of the waters and the woods were hushed; the golden flies ceased the music of their wings.

Then answered the pilgrim, tremblingly: "Lo! I also am a Brahman, ye holy ones; but to me it hath not been given to obtain the supreme wisdom, seeing that I am unworthy to know the Absolute. Yet I sought diligently for the space of sixty years to obtain holiness; and our law teaches that if one have not reached wisdom at sixty, it is his duty, returning home, to take a wife, that he may have holy children. This I did; and one son was born unto me, beautiful as the Vasika flower, learned even in his childhood. And I did all I could to instil into him the love of uttermost wisdom, teaching him myself until it came to pass that he knew more than I, wherefore I sought him teachers from Elephanta. And in the beauty of his youth he was taken from me — borne away with the silk of manhood already shadowing his lip. Wherefore I pray ye, holy men,

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tell me in what place Yamaraja dwells, that I may pray him to give me back my boy!"

Then all the holy voices answered together as one voice, as the tone of many waters flowing in one cadence: "Verily thou hast not been fitted to seek the supreme wisdom, seeing that in the winter of thine age thou dost still mourn by reason of a delusion. For the stars die in their courses, the heavens wither as leaves, the worlds vanish as the smoke of incense. Lives are as flower-petals opening to fade; the works of man as verses written upon water. He who hath reached supreme wisdom mourneth existence only.... Yet, that thou mayst be enlightened, we will even advise thee. The kingdom of Yama thou mayst not visit, for no man may tread the way with mortal feet. But many hundred leagues toward the setting of the sun, there is a valley, with a city shining in the midst thereof. There no man dwells, but the gods only, when they incarnate themselves to live upon earth. And upon the eighth day of each month Yamaraja visits them, and thou mayst see him. Yet beware of failing a moment to practice the ceremonies, to recite the Mantras, lest a strange evil befall thee!... Depart now from us, that we may reënter into contemplation!"

So, after journeying many moons, the good Brahman stood at last upon the height above the valley, and saw the ivory-white city — a vision of light,

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like the heaven Trayastrinshas. Not Hanoumat, the messenger of Rama, beheld such splendor, when he haunted the courts of Lanka by night, and beheld in Ravana's palace the loveliest of women interlaced in the embrace of sleep, "the garland of women's bodies interwoven." Terraces fretted by magical chisels rose heavenward, tier upon tier, until their summit seemed but the fleeciness of summer clouds; arches towered upon arches; pink marble gates yawned like the mouths of slumbering bayaderes; crenellated walls edged with embroidery of inlaid gold surrounded gardens deep as forests; domes white-rounded, like breasts, made pearly curves against the blue; fountains, silver-nippled, showered perfumed spray; and above the great gate of the palace of the gods, where Devas folded their wings on guard, flamed a vast carbuncle, upon whose face was graven the Word comprehended only by those who have attained supreme wisdom. And standing before the gate, the Brahman burnt the holy incense and recited the holy Mantras, . . . until the Devas, pitying him, rolled back the doors of gold, and bade him enter.

Lofty as heaven seemed that palace hall, whose vault of cerulean blue hung, self-sustained, above the assembly of the gods; and the pavement of sable marble glimmered like a fathomless lake. Yet, as the Brahman prostrated himself, not daring to lift his eyes, he felt that it quavered under the tread

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of mortal feet even as when earth trembles. In its reflection he beheld the gods seated in assembly, not awful of image as in earthly temples, but as beings of light, star-diademed, rosy with immortality. . . . Only Yamaraja's brow bore no starry flame; and there was in his gaze a profundity as of deep answering unto deep. To the ears of the worshiper his voice came like the voice of waters pouring over the verge of an echoless abyss, . . . and in obedience to that voice the Brahman uttered his prayer.

And the Lord of Death, replying in strange tones, said: "Pious and just is this prayer, O child of Brahma! Thy son is now in the Garden of the East. Take him by the hand and go thy way." . . .

Joyfully the Brahman entered that garden of fountains that flow forever; of fruits, eternally ripe, that never fall; of flowers immortal, that never fade. And he discerned, among children innumerable disporting, his own beloved son playing beside the fountains; so that he cried out with a great cry, and ran to him and clasped him and wept over him, exclaiming: "O sweet son! O my beloved first-born! dost thou not know me, thy father who mourned thee so long — who hath even entered the presence of Yamaraja, the Lord of Death, to seek thee?" . .

But like a mist the child passed from his embrace and answered, with a wonder in his eyes: "*I know thee not!*" . . .

Then, kneeling in tears before the boy, the Brah-

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man cried: "O sweetest son, hast thou indeed forgotten the father who loved thee more than his own life — who taught thy infant lips to utter the holy prayers — who denied thee no wish of thy heart, bringing thee up as the son of a rajah, teaching thee all the wisdom of the Brahmans? Hast thou forgotten thy mother, also, who weeps for thee now all alone, seeing that I have journeyed so long to find thee? Nay! Look at me with thy eyes! Look at me again, that thou mayst know me! Or is it because my grief hath so changed me that I am no longer the same in thy sight?"...

But the child ever replied: "I know thee not!"

Then, casting himself upon the ground, the Brahman wept as one smitten by infinite despair, and so sobbed, until the child, touching him, spoke again: "I know thee not! Thou art to me a stranger! I know, indeed, that thou art foolish — uttering the terms *father* and *mother*, signifying conditions that pass away like the grass of the earth. I perceive, also, that thou art sorrowful, and therefore a victim of delusion; for sorrow springeth from ignorance and desire, as the fungus from corruption. Here we know not desire, we know not sorrow, neither do we harbor illusion. Thou art no more to me than the wind to the moon, than the flame blown out is to the object once illuminated. Get thee from hence, therefore, as it will profit thee nothing to bring thy sorrow and thy folly into this place."...

So the Brahman departed, speechless for grief.

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Only then did he seek the Buddha, the Shaman Gautama, that he might obtain advice and consolation. And the Buddha, pitying him, laid his hand upon his heart, and gave him rest, saying:

"O Brahman, thou hast only been punished for thy self-delusion and folly.

"Know that the spirit of the dead receiveth a new bodily form after its departure, so that former relationship utterly ceaseth, even as one visiting a tavern by the wayside is no longer a guest, having departed therefrom.

"Much thou art to be pitied for thy weakness and this delusion of thy love, nor canst thou find consolation but in supreme wisdom only.

"Vainly do men concern themselves regarding wife and child; for the end cometh to all as a roaring torrent, sweeping away whatsoever earthly affection clings to.

"Then neither father nor mother can save; then neither love nor strength may succor; parent and kinsman become as blind men set to guard a burning lamp.

"Therefore the truly wise considereth not such things, seeking only to save the world, to enlighten men, to destroy sorrow by destroying desire, to redeem himself.

"Even as the wind driveth away clouds, so should the wise seek to banish thought, to banish worldly consciousness, and thus escape forever the future birth and death, attaining the eightfold

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Wisdom — finding at last the eternal peace, the eternal rest.

"Whatsoever is high shall be brought low; wheresoever is agreement will surely come division; where there is birth there shall surely be death also.

"Therefore cast off, O Brahman, all passion, all affection, all regret, as the Vasika plant sheds its withered flowers; therefore flee the ignorant, and seek in solitude the true wisdom, needing no companion, rejoicing as the elephant escaped from the herd...."

And, perceiving the vanity of life, the evanescence of joy, the folly of grief, that Brahman ceased to mourn, and besought permission to follow the footsteps of the Teacher....

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THE LOTUS OF FAITH; OR, THE FURNACE OF FIRE

WHICH is in the "Jatakas" of Buddha.... At his birth the waters of the Sea became fresh, and the deeps of the Seven Hells were illuminated. The blind received their sight, that they might behold the bliss of the world; the deaf their hearing, that they might know the tidings of joy; by sevenfold lotus-flowers the rocks were riven asunder; the light of glory immeasurable filled the world systems of ten thousand suns....

IN the years when Brahmadatta reigned over Benares — the holy city — the city of apes and peacocks — the city possessing the seven precious things, and resounding with the ten cries, with the trumpeting of elephants, the neighing of horses, the melody of instruments and voices of singing girls — then the future Buddha-elect was born as a son in the family of the royal treasurer, after having passed through kotis of births innumerable.

Now the duration of one koti is ten millions of years.

And the Buddha-elect, the Bodhisattva, was brought up in splendid luxury as a prince of the holy city, and while yet a boy mastered all branches of human knowledge, and becoming a man succeeded his father as keeper of the treasury. But even while exercising the duties of his office, he gave rich gifts

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to holy men, and allowed none to excel him in almsgiving.

At that time there also lived a holy Buddha, who, striving to fulfill each and all of the Ten Perfections had passed seven days and seven nights without eating so much as one grain of rice. Arousing himself at last from his holy trance, he cleansed and robed his person, and purified himself, and passing through the air by virtue of his perfection, alighted before the door of the treasurer's house, with his begging-bowl in his hand.

Then the Bodhisattva, beholding the sacred mendicant awaiting in silence, bade a servant fetch to him the Buddha's bowl, that he might fill it with such food as those who seek supreme wisdom may permit themselves to eat. So the servant proceeded to fetch the bowl.

But even as he advanced, and before he might reach out his hand, the ground rocked and heaved like the sea beneath him; and the earth opened itself, and yawned to its entrails, making an abyss between the holy mendicant and the servant of the Bodhisattva. And the gulf became a hell of seething flame, like the hell of Avici, like the heart of a volcano in which even the crags of granite melt as wax, pass away as clouds. Also a great and fantastic darkness grew before the sun, and blackened all his face.

Wherefore the servant and his fellows fled shrieking, leaving only the Bodhisattva standing upon one

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verge of the abyss, and the Buddha, calmly waiting, upon the other. Where the feet of the perfect mendicant stood, the abyss widened not; but it widened swiftly, devouring the ground before the feet of the Bodhisattva, as though seeking to engulf him. For Mara, Lord of Rakshasas and of evil ones, desiring that the Buddha might die, sought thus to prevent the almsgiving of the Bodhisattva. And the darkness before the sun was the darkness of Mara's awful face.

And as a muttering of mountain thunder came a voice, saying: "The Buddha shall not live by thine alms-gift; his hour hath come.... Mine is the fire between thee and him."

And the Bodhisattva looked at the Buddha across the abyss of fire; and the Buddha's face changed not, neither did he utter a word to dissuade nor give one sign to encourage.

But the Bodhisattva cried aloud, even while the abyss, widening, grew vaster to devour him: "Mara, thou shalt not prevail! To thee power is not given against duty!... My lord Buddha, I come to thee, fearing not; take thou this food from the hands of thy servant."

And with the dish of rice in his hands, the Bodhisattva strode into the roaring waste of fire, uttering these jewel-words: "Better to enter willingly into hell than neglect a duty or knowingly commit a wrong!"...

Even then the Buddha smiled on the other verge.

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And ere the Bodhisattva could fall, there suddenly arose from the depths of the pit of fire a vast and beautiful lotus-flower, like unto that from whose womb of gold was Brahma born; and it received the feet of the Bodhisattva, and bore him beyond the pit, upcasting over him a spray of golden dust like a shower of stars. So he poured into the Buddha's bowl the holy gift of alms.

The darkness vanished; the abyss was not; the Buddha, rising in air, passed over a bridge of rosy cloud to the mountain regions of Himalaya. But the Bodhisattva, still standing upon the lotus of gold, long discoursed unto the people concerning holy things.

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RUNES FROM THE KALEWALA

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RUNES FROM THE KALEWALA

THE MAGICAL WORDS

THERE is in the ancient Finnish tongue a strange book written, called "Kalewala," a book of runes, treating about the beginning of the world, and about the god-smiths who first wrought the foundations of the sky, and about the witches and the enchanters of the farthest North. Of witches Louhi was among the greatest; and her daughter was wooed by gods and heroes — even by Wainamoinen the mightiest.... So fair was the virgin that her beauty gave light like the moon; so white were her bones that their whiteness glimmered through the transparency of her flesh; so clear was the ivory of her bones that the marrow could be seen within them.... And the story of how Wainamoinen built a boat that he might sail to woo the virgin, is thus told in the runes of the "Kalewala":

... THE aged and valiant Wainamoinen resolved to build himself a boat, a swift war-boat. He hewed the trees, he hewed the trunks of the pines and the firs, singing songs the while, chanting the runes that banish evil. And as he sang the smitten trees answered him, the fibres of the oak and of the fir and of the mountain pine yielded up their secrets

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in sounds that to other men seemed echoes only, but which to Wainamoinen's ears were syllables and words — words wrung from the wood by enchantment.

Now only the keel remained to be wrought; the strong keel of the war-ship had yet to be fashioned. And Wainamoinen smote down a great oak, that he might carve and curve its body as keels are curved and carven. But the dying oak uttered its words of wood, its magical voice of warning, saying: "Never may I serve for the keel of thy boat, for the bottom of thy war-ship. Lo! the worms have made their crooked dwellings within my roots: yesterday the raven alighted upon my head; bloody was his back, bloody his crest, and blood lay clotting upon the blackness of his neck."

Therefore the ancient Wainamoinen left the oak, and sought among the mountain firs and the mountain pines for flawless keel-wood; and he found wood worthy of his war-boat, and he wrought the same into shape by the singing of magical songs.

For the words of enchantment by which shapes are shaped were known to him; by magical words he had wrought the hull, with magical words had formed the oars; and ribs and keel were by wizard song interlocked together. But to perfect the prow three words must be sung, three warlock words; and those three words Wainamoinen did not know, and his heart was troubled because he did not know them.

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There was a shepherd dwelling among the hills — an ancient shepherd who had beheld ten times a hundred moons; and him Wainamoinen questioned concerning the three magical words.

But the ancient shepherd answered him dreamily: "Surely thou mayst find a hundred words, a thousand syllables of magical song, upon the heads of the swallows, upon the shoulders of the wild geese, upon the necks of the swans!"

Then the aged and valiant Wainamoinen went forth in search of the magical words. He slew the flying swallows by thousands; thousands of white geese he slew; thousands of snowy swans were stricken by his arrows. Yet he found no word written upon their heads, their shoulders, their necks, nor even so much as the beginning of a word. Then he thought unto himself: "Surely I may find a hundred words, a thousand syllables of song, under the tongues of the summer reindeer, within the ruddy mouth of the white squirrel."

And he went his way to seek the magical words. He strewed the vast plains with the bodies of slaughtered reindeer; he slew the white squirrels by thousands and tens of thousands. But he found no word beneath the tongue of the reindeer, no magical word in the mouth of the white squirrel, not even so much as the beginning of a word.

Yet again Wainamoinen thought to himself, saying: "Surely I may find a hundred magical

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words, a thousand syllables of song, in the dwelling of the Queen of Death, in the land of Tuonela, in the underground plains of Manala."

And he took his way unto the dwelling-place of Tuonela, to the moonless land of the dead, to the underground plains of Manala. Three days he journeyed thither with steps lighter than air; three days he journeyed as a shadow walking upon shadow.

And he came at last unto the banks of the sacred river, the sable shore of the black river, over which the spirits of the dead must pass; and he cried out to the children of Death: "O daughters of Tuoni, bring hither your bark! O children of Manala, bring hither your bark, that I may cross over the black river!"

But the daughters of Death, the children of Hell, cried out, saying: "The bark shall be taken over to thee only when thou shalt have told us how thou hast come to Manala, how thou hast reached Tuonela — the abode of Death, the domain of ghosts."

And Wainamoinen called out to them across the waters, saying: "Surely Tuoni himself hath conducted me hither; surely the Queen of Death hath driven me to Tuonela."

But the daughters of Tuonela waxed wroth; the virgins of Kalma were angry. And they answered: "We know the artifice of men; we perceive the lie within thy mouth. For surely thou livest!

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No wound hath slain thee; no woe hath consumed thee; no disaster hath destroyed thee; no grave hath been dug for thee. Who, therefore, hath brought thee alive to Manala?"

And Wainamoinen, answering, called out to them across the waters: "Iron surely hath brought me to the land of death; steel surely hath accompanied me unto Manala."

The daughters of Tuonela waxed wroth; the virgins of Kalma were angry. And they answered: "We know all artifices of men; we perceive the lie within thy mouth. Had iron brought thee to Tuonela, had steel accompanied thee unto Manala, thy garments would drip with blood.... Who brought thee to Manala?"

And Wainamoinen called out again to them across the waters: "Fire hath brought me unto Manala; flame hath accompanied me to Tuonela."

The daughters of Tuonela waxed wroth; the virgins of Kalma were angry. And they cried out: "We know all artifices of men; we perceive the lie within thy mouth. Had fire brought thee to Manala, had flame accompanied thee to Tuonela, thy garments would be consumed by the fire, the glow of the flame would be upon thee. Who brought thee to Manala?"

And Wainamoinen yet again called out to them across the black river, saying: "Water hath brought me to Manala; water hath accompanied me to Tuonela."

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The daughters of Tuonela waxed wroth; the virgins of Kalma were angry. And they answered, saying: "We know all the artifices of men; we perceive the lie within thy mouth. For there is no dripping of water from thy garments. Cease, therefore, to lie to us; for we know thou livest; we perceive that no wound hath slain thee, no woe consumed thee, no disaster hath crushed thy bones. Who brought thee to Manala? who guided thee to Tuonela?"

Then Wainamoinen called out to them across the river: "Surely I will now utter the truth. I have made me a boat by my art; I have wrought me a war-boat by magical song. With a song I shaped the hull; with a song I formed the keel; with a song I fashioned the oars. Yet three words are wanting to me — three magical words by which I may perfect the carven prow in its place; and I have come to Tuonela to find these three words; I have come to Manala to seek these three words of enchantment. Bring hither your bark, O children of Tuonela! bring hither your boat, O virgins of Kalma!"

So the daughters of Death came over the dark river in their black boat, and they rowed Wainamoinen to the further shore, to the waste of wandering ghosts; and they gave him to drink of what the dead drink, and to eat of what the dead devour. And Wainamoinen laid him down and slept, being weary with his mighty journey.

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He slept and dreamed; but his garments slept not — his enchanted garments kept watch for him.

Now the daughter of Tuoni, the iron-fingered daughter of Death, seated herself in the darkness upon a great stone in the midst of the waters; and with iron fingers wove a net of iron thread, one thousand ells in length.

The sons of Tuoni, the sons of the Queen of Death, also seated themselves in the same darkness upon the same great stone in the midst of the same waters, and with their hookéd fingers, with their iron finger-nails, also wove a net of iron thread, a thousand ells in length.

And they cast their net into the river, across the river, that they might ensnare Wainamoinen, that they might entangle the magician, that they might prevent him from ever leaving the abyss of Manala, ever leaving the domain of Tuonela, so long as the golden moon should circle in heaven, even so long as the silver sun should light the world of men.

But the garments of Wainamoinen kept watch, the enchanted garments of the magician slept not. And Wainamoinen uttered a magical word, and changed himself into a stone; and the stone rolled into the black river.

And the stone became a viper of iron, and passed sinuously through the meshes of the nets, and through the river currents, and into the black reeds upon the black river's further bank.

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So Wainamoinen passed from the kingdom of Tuoni, from the children of Death; but he had not found the magical words, nor so much as the part of a word.

Then thought Wainamoinen unto himself: "Surely I may find a hundred words, a thousand syllables of song, in the mouth of the earth-giant, in the entrails of the ancient Kalewa! Long is the way to his resting-place; one must travel awhile over the points of women's needles, and awhile upon the sharp edges of warriors' swords, and yet again awhile upon the sharp steel of the battle-axes of heroes."

And Wainamoinen went to the forge of his brother Ilmarinnen — Ilmarinnen, the Eternal Smith, who forged the vault of heaven, leaving no mark of the teeth of the pincers, no dent of the blows of the hammer — Ilmarinnen, who forged for men during the age of darkness a sun of silver and a moon of gold. And he cried out: "O Ilmarinnen, mighty brother, forge me shoes of iron, gloves of iron, a coat of iron! forge me a staff of iron with a pith of steel, that I may wrest the magic words from the stomach of Kalewa, from the dead entrails of the earth-giant."

And Ilmarinnen forged them. Yet he said: "O brother Wainamoinen, the ancient Kalewa is dead; the grave of the earth-giant is deep. Thou mayst obtain no word from him — not even the beginning of a word."

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But Wainamoinen departed; Wainamoinen hastened over the way strewn with the points of needles and the edges of swords and axe-heads of sharpest steel. He ran swiftly over them with shoes of iron; he tore them from his path with gloves of iron, until he reached the resting-place of Kalewa, the vast grave of the earth-giant.

For a thousand moons and more Kalewa had slept beneath the earth. The poplar-tree, the haapa, had taken root upon his shoulders; the white birch, the koivu, was growing from his temples; the elder tree, the leppa, was springing from his cheeks; and his beard had become overgrown with pahju-bark, with the bark of the drooping willow. The shadowy fir, the oravikuusi, was rooted in his forehead; the mountain-pine, the havukonka, was sprouting from his teeth; the dark spruce, the petaja, was springing from his feet.

But Wainamoinen tore the haapa from his shoulders, and the koivu from his temples, and the leppa from his cheeks, and the pahju-bark from his beard, and the oravikuusi from his forehead, and the havukonka from his teeth, and the petaja from his feet.

Then into the mouth of the Mountain-Breaker, into the mouth of the buried giant, Wainamoinen mightily thrust his staff of smithied iron.

And Kalewa awoke from his slumber of ages — awoke with groans of pain — and he closed his jaws upon the staff; but his teeth could not crush

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the core of steel, could not shatter the staff of iron. And as Kalewa opened wider his mouth to devour the tormentor, lo! Wainamoinen leaped into the yawning throat and descended into the monstrous entrails. And Wainamoinen kindled a flame in the giant's belly — built him a forge in his entrails.

Then Kalewa, in his great agony, called on that god who leans upon the axis of the world, and upon the blue goddesses of the waters, and upon the deities of the icy wildernesses, and upon the spirits of the forest, and even upon the great Jumala, at whose birth the brazen mountains trembled and lakes were changed into hills. But the gods came not to aid him.

Then Kalewa cursed his tormentor with a thousand magical curses — with curses of wind and storm and fire — with curses that change men's faces into stone — with curses that transport the accursed to the vast deserts of Laponia, where the hoof of the horse is never heard, where the children of the mare can find no pasturage. But the curses harmed not Wainamoinen; the curses only called forth the laughter of scorn from the lips of Wainamoinen.

And Wainamoinen cried out unto Kalewa: "Never shall I depart from hence, O thou mightiest singer of runes, until I have learned from thee the three magical words which I desire — the three words of enchantment that I have sought throughout the world in vain. Sing to me, O Kalewa, thy

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songs, thy most wondrous songs, thy marvelous songs of enchantment."

So the giant Kalewa, the possessor of sublimest wisdom, the singer of marvelous runes, opened his mouth and sang his songs for Wainamoinen — his most wondrous songs, his wizard songs.

Words succeeded to words, verses to verses, wizard runes to wizard runes. Ere Kalewa could sing all that he knew, could utter all that he had learned, the mountains would cease to be, the waters of the rivers would dry up, the great lakes be depopulated of their finny people, the sea have forgotten its power to make waves.

Unceasingly he sang for many days, unceasingly for many sleepless nights; he sang the songs of wizards, the songs of enchantment, the songs that create or destroy.

He sang the songs of wisdom, the runes sung by the gods before the beginning of the world, the verses by whose utterance nothingness became substance and darkness became light.

And as he sang the fair Sun paused in her course to hear him; the golden Moon stopped in her path to listen; the awful billows of the sea stood still; the icy rivers that devour the pines, that swallow up the firs, ceased to rage; the mighty cataracts hung motionless above their abysses; the waves of Juortana lifted high their heads to hear.

And Wainamoinen heard at last the three words, the three magical words, he sought for; and he

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ceased tormenting Kalewa, and departed from him. So Kalewa sank again into his eternal slumber, and the earth that loved him recovered him, and the forests rewove their network of knotted roots above his place of sleep....

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THE FIRST MUSICIAN

In the ancient runes of the Finns, the runes of the "Kalewala," is related the creation of the world from the yolk of an egg, and of the heavens from the shell of the egg; also the origin of Iron and the birth of Steel and the beginning of Music.... Now the first musician was no other than Wainamoinen; and the first kantele, triple-stringed, was made by him from the resonant wood of the fir, and from the bones of a giant pike, as is told in the Twenty-Second Rune. Out of the fir-tree was formed the body of the kantele; out of the teeth of the pike-fish were the screws wrought; and the strings were made of hairs from the black mane of the steed of Hiisi the magician — from the shining mane of the stallion of Hiisi, the herder of wolves and bears....

...So the instrument was completed, the kantele was prepared; and the aged and valiant Wainamoinen bade the old men to play upon it, and to sing the runes of old.

And they sang, but wearily, as winds in mountain wastes; and their voices trembled frostily, and the instrument rebelled against the touch of their feeble fingers.

Then the ancient and valiant Wainamoinen commanded the young men to sing. But their fingers became cramped upon the strings, and the sounds called forth were sorrowful, and the instrument rebelled against their touch. Joy answered not unto joy, song responded not unto song.

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Then the ancient and valiant Wainamoinen sent the kantele to the wizard people who dwelt in the wastes of ice, to the people of Pohjola, to the Witch of Pohjola.

And the Witch sang, and the witch-virgins with her; the wizards also, and the children of the wizards. But joy answered not unto joy; song responded not unto song. And the kantele shrieked beneath the touch of their fingers, shrieked like one who, fearing greatly in the blackness of the night, feeleth invisible hands upon him.

Then spake an aged man who had seen more than two hundred winters — an ancient man aroused by the shrieking of the kantele from his slumber within the recess of the hearth: "Cease! cease! for the sounds which ye utter make anguish in my brain, the noises which ye make do chill the marrow within my bones. Let the instrument be cast into the waters, or returned forthwith unto him who wrought it."

Then from the strings of the kantele issued sweet sounds, and the sounds shaped themselves into words, and the kantele answered with its voice, praying: "Cast me not into the deep, but return me rather unto him who wrought me; for in the hands of my creator I will give forth sounds of joy, I will utter sounds of harmonious sweetness."

So they took back the kantele unto Wainamoinen, who had wrought it.

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And the ancient and valiant Wainamoinen washed his thumbs; he purified his fingers; he seated himself by the sea upon the Stone of Joy, upon the Hillock of Silver, even at the summit of the Hill of Gold; and he took the instrument within his hands, and lifted up his voice, saying: "Let him that hath never heard the strong joy of runes, the sweet sound of instruments, the sound of music, come hither and hear!"

And the ancient Wainamoinen began to sing. Limpid his voice as the voice of running water, deep and clear, mighty and beautiful.

Lightly his fingers ran over the strings of the kantele; and the kantele sang in answer — sang weirdly, sang wondrously, sang throbbingly, like the throats of a thousand birds. And its joy answered unto the joy of the singer; its song responded unto Wainamoinen's song.

All the living creatures of the forest, all the living creatures of air, drew nigh unto the rune-singer, gathered themselves about the mighty chanter, that they might hear the suavity of his voice, that they might taste the sweetness of his song.

The gray wolves came from their lurking-places in the vast marshes; the bears deserted their dwellings under the roots of the firs, within the hollows of the giant pines; and they clambered over the hedges in their way, they broke down the obstacles before them. And the wolves mounted upon the heights, the bears upon the trees, while Waina-

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moinen called Joy into the world, while Wainamoinen sang his wondrous song.

The lord of the forest, also, the old man of the black beard — Knippana, king of the joyous woods; and all the followers of Tapio, god of wild creatures, came forth to hear, and were visible. Even the wife of the forest king, the goddess of savage beasts, the mistress of Tapiola, donned her raiment of red, and put on her azure stockings, and ascended a hollow birch that she might lend ear to the songs of the god.

All animals of the woods, all birds of the air, hurried to hear the marvelous art of the musician, hastened to taste the sweetness of his song.

The eagle descended from the clouds; the falcon clave the airs; the white gulls rose from the far sea-marshes, the swans from the clear deeps of running water; the swift lark, the quick finch, the comely linnet, came to perch upon the shoulders of the god.

The Sun, bright virgin of the sky — the Sun, rich in her splendors — and the fair-shining Moon, had paused in their paths; the first upon the luminous vault of heaven, the other upon the end of a long cloud. There were they weaving their subtle tissues of light — weaving with shuttle of gold, carding with carding-comb of silver. Suddenly they heard the unknown voice of song — the voice, mighty and sweet, of the rune-singer. And the shuttle of gold escaped from their hands, and the carding-comb of silver slipped from their fingers, and the threads of their tissue were broken.

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All animals living in the waters, all the thousand-finned fishes of the deep, came to hear the voice of Wainamoinen, came to taste the sweetness of his song.

Swiftly came the salmon and the trout, the pikes also and the sea-dogs; all the great fishes and all the little fishes swam toward the shore, and remained as nigh as they might remain, and lifted their heads to listen.

And Ahto, monarch of waters — Ahto, ancient as the ocean, and bearded with water-weeds — arose upon his great water-lily above the waves.

The fertile wife of the sea-god was combing her hair with a comb of gold, and she heard the voice of the singer. And the comb fell from her hands; trembling of pleasure seized her, torture of desire came upon her to hear, so that she arose from the green abyss and approached the shore. There, leaning with her bosom upon the rock, she listened to the sounds of the kantele, mingling with the voice of Wainamoinen — so tender the sounds, so sweet the song!

All the heroes wept; the hardest of hearts were softened; there were none of all having never wept before who did not weep then.

The youths wept; the old men wept; the strong men wept; the virgins wept; the little infants wept; even Wainamoinen also felt the source of his own tears rising to overflow.

And soon his tears began to fall, outnumbering the wild berries of the hills, the heads of the swallows, the eggs of the fowls.

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They streamed upon his cheeks; and from his cheeks they fell upon his knees, and from his knees they dropped upon his feet, and from his feet they rolled into the dust.

And his tear-drops passed through his six garments of wool, his six girdles of gold, his seven robes of blue, his eight tunics all thickly woven.

And the tears of Wainamoinen flowed as a river, and became a river, and poured themselves to the shores of the sea, and precipitated themselves from the shores into the deeps of the abyss, into the region of black sands.

There did they blossom; there were they transformed into pearls,— pearls destined for the crowns of kings, for the eternal joy of noblest heroes.

And the aged Wainamoinen cried out: "O youths, O daughters of illustrious race! is there none among ye who will go to gather up my tears from the deeps of the ocean, from the region of black sand?"

But the youths and the elders answered, saying: "There is none among us willing to go to gather up thy tears from the deeps of the ocean, from the region of black sand."

Then a seamew, a seamew with plumage of blue, dipped her beak into the cold waves; and she gathered the pearls, and she gathered the tears, of Wainamoinen from the deeps of the ocean, from the region of black sand.

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THE HEALING OF WAINAMOINEN

... She is all fair, the Goddess of Veins — the Goddess Suonetar, the beneficent Goddess of Veins. Marvelously doth she spin the veins of men with her wondrous spindle, with her distaff of brass, with her spinning-wheel of iron....

Like the leaping of the mountain stream, like the rushing of a torrent, the blood issued from the knee of Wainamoinen, wounded by his own axe through the craft of Hiisi the Evil, through the malice of Lempo, the herder of wolves and bears.

The ancient and valiant Wainamoinen had knowledge of all wisdom, all speech that is eternal, all magical words save only the word by which wizard wounds are healed. He invoked the magical art, he uttered the awful imprecation; carefully he read the Original Words, pronounced the runes of science.

But he had forgotten the mightiest words — the Words of Blood, the charmed words by which the palpitant torrent is checked, by which the gory stream is held back, by which invincible dikes are cast athwart the places broken by iron, athwart the bites made by the blue teeth of steel.

And the blood ceased not to gush bubbling from the wound of the hero, from the knee of Wainamoinen.

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The aged and valiant Wainamoinen harnessed his steed to his brown sledge; he mounted upon the seat, smote the swift horse, and cracked his great whip adorned with pearls.

The steed flew over the long course, drawing the brown sledge, devouring distance. Swift as wind was the driving of Wainamoinen, until he neared the dwelling of the sorcerers, the first of the habitations of the wizards. And he halted at the threshold, and cried: "Is there in this habitation any man learned in the knowledge of iron — any man who can oppose a dike to this river, who can check this torrent of blood?"

A child, a little child, was seated in the middle of the floor; and the child answered, saying: "There is no man here learned in the knowledge of iron — no man able to assuage with his breath even the bruises of wood, nor to ease the pain of heroes.... Go thou to another habitation."

The ancient and valiant Wainamoinen made his great whip, adorned with pearls, whistle upon the flanks of his rapid courser. Swift as lightning his course, until they came to the middle dwelling; and Wainamoinen halted at the threshold, and cried aloud: "Is there in this habitation any man learned in the knowledge of iron — any man able to oppose a dike to this river, to check this torrent of blood?"

An aged woman was there, lying under her blankets, chattering, babbling, within the furthest end

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of the recess of the hearth — an aged woman with three teeth only — the wisest woman in all that country. And she arose and drew nigh unto the door, and made reply, saying: "There is no man here learned enough to comprehend the misfortune of the hero, to ease his pain, to stop the river of the veins, the rainfall of blood, the torrent of blood outrolling. Go, seek thou such a man in some other habitation."

The aged and valiant Wainamoinen made his great whip, adorned with pearls, whistle upon the flanks of his swift steed. Lightning-wise he followed the long way leading to the highest habitation. And he descended at the threshold, and leaning against a pillar, cried aloud: "Is there in this habitation any man learned in the knowledge of iron — any man able to oppose a dike to this river, to check this torrent of blood?"

An aged man dwelt within the great fireplace. His voice roared from the recess of the glowing hollow: "We have checked mightier ones, we have enchained swifter ones, we have overcome greater dangers, we have broken down loftier obstacles — even by the Three Words of the Creator, by the utterance of the Original Words, the holy words. By them the mouths of rivers, the courses of lakes, the fury of cataracts, have been overcome. We have separated straits from promontories; we have conjoined isthmuses with isthmuses."

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The aged Wainamoinen descended from his sledge, and entered beneath the old man's roof. A cup of silver was brought to him, and a cup of gold; but these could not contain the least part of the blood of Wainamoinen, the blood of the noble god.

The old man roared from the recess of the hearth — the long-beard cried out: "What manner of man art thou? What hero? Already have seven cups, eight great vessels, been filled with the blood flowing from thy knee! Ah! would I could utter other magical words — even the great Words of Blood! But, alas! I have forgotten the origin of Iron."

Then said the aged Wainamoinen: "I know the origin of Iron; I know the birth of Steel. There were three children whose origin was the same: Water, which is the eldest; Iron, which is the youngest; Fire, to which the middle rank belongs. And Fire soon displayed its rage; flames lifted themselves insolently, and waxed vast with pride. The fields were consumed, the marshes were scorched in that great year of sterility, in that fatal summer which devoured with inextinguishable fire all creatures of nature. Then did Iron seek a refuge, a place wherein to hide." . . .

The old man roared from the recess of the hearth: "Where did Iron hide itself? Where did it find refuge in that great year of barrenness, in that fatal summer which devoured all creatures of nature?"

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The aged Wainamoinen, the valiant Wainamoinen, made answer: "Then Iron hid itself; Iron found a refuge in the extremity of a long cloud, in the summit of an oak stripped of its branches, in the budding bosom of a young girl.... There were three virgins, three affianced maidens, who poured forth upon the ground the milk of their breasts. The milk of the first was black; the milk of the second, white; the milk of the third was ruddy. Of the virgin whose milk was black, Flexible Iron was born; of her whose milk was white, Fragile Iron was born; of her with the ruddy milk was born Steel.... Then for two years Iron hid itself in the midst of a vast marsh, upon the summit of a rock where the white swans laid their eggs, where the wild duck hatched out her little ones. And the wolf rushed through the marsh; and the bear rushed into the sterile plain; and they tore up the earth that concealed the Iron. But a god, passing through that barren place, saw the black sand that the wolf had torn up, that the bear had trampled beneath his feet.... And that day the Iron was taken out of the marsh, and purged from the slime of the earth, and purified by drying from the humidity of the waters."

The old man roared from the recess of the hearth: "So that was the origin of Iron? that was the birth of Steel?"

But the valiant Wainamoinen made answer: "Nay! not yet has the origin of Iron been told. For, without devouring Fire, Iron may not be born;

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without Water, it may not be hardened. Into the workshop of the great smith it was borne, into the forge of Ilmarinnen; and the mighty craftsman, the Eternal Smith, said unto it: 'If I place thee within my fire, if I put thee into the flame of my forge-fire, thou wilt become arrogant, thou wilt wax strong, thou wilt spread terror about thee, thou wilt slay thy brother, thou wilt kill the son of thy mother.'... Then the Iron within the forge fires, under the blows of the hammer, sware this oath: 'I have trees to rend, hearts of stone to gnaw; no! never will I slay my brother, never will I kill the son of my mother.'... Then did Ilmarinnen soften the Iron within the heart of the furnace, and shape it upon the anvil. But ere dipping it into the water, he tested with his tongue, he tasted with his palate, the creative juices of Steel, the water that gives hardness unto Iron. And he cried: 'This water is powerless to create Steel, to harden Iron. O Mehilainen, bird of Hiisi! O Herlihainen, my bird-friend! fly hither upon thine agile wings; fly over the marshes, over the lands, over the straits of the ocean! bring me honey upon thy feathers; bear to me upon thy tongue the honey of seven meadow-stalks, of six flower-pistils, for the Steel I am going to make, for the Iron I wish to harden.'... But Herlihainen, the evil bird of Hiisi the Evil, brought the venom of blood, the black juices of a worm that his lizard-eyes had seen, the hidden poison of the toad; and he gave these to Ilmarinnen for the Steel

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which was being prepared, the Iron that was to be tempered. And suddenly the Iron quivered with rage; it growled; it moved; its oath was forgotten; like a dog it swallowed its own oath, and it slew its brother, it murdered the son of its mother. Even now it plunges into flesh, bites the knees of men, rages so that blood flows and flows and overflows in vast torrents."

The old man roared from the recess of the hearth: "Now I know the origin of Iron, the fatal destiny of Steel!" And to his memory came back the Original Words, the great Words of Blood; and he cursed the Iron with magical curses, and quelled with caressing speech the panic of the fleeing blood. And the hurt of the Iron ceased, and the red torrent stayed its flowing.

Then the old man took within his fingers the extremities of the veins, and counted them, and uttered the magical prayer:

All fair is she, the Goddess of Veins — Suonetar, the beneficent Goddess of Veins. Marvelously doth she spin the veins of men with her beautiful spindle, with her distaff of brass, with her spinning-wheel of iron.... Come, O Goddess of Veins! Come unto me! I invoke thy succor, I call thy name!... Bring hither in thy bosom a roll of ruddy flesh, a blue skein of veins, that the wound may be filled, that the ends of the veins may be tied!...

And suddenly the hurt of Wainamoinen was healed: the flesh became firmer than before; the

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severed veins were retied, the severed muscles rejoined, the broken bones reknit.

And many other wonderful things said and done by the old man within the recess of the hearth are told of in the Fourth Rune of the ancient Kalewala.

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STORIES OF MOSLEM LANDS

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STORIES OF MOSLEM LANDS

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BOUTIMAR, THE DOVE

...BEYOND the seas which are known roar the waters of that Tenebrous Ocean that is unknown to mortals. There the long breakers chant an eternal hymn, in tones unlike to the voices of other seas. And in that ocean there is an island, and in that island the Fountain of Youth unceasingly bubbles up from the mystic caverns; and it was that fountain which King Alexander, the Two-Horned, vainly sought. Only his general, the Prophet Khader, found it, whereby he became immortal. And of other mortals Solomon only beheld the waters of that fountain, according to the Persian legend written in the nine hundredth year of the Hejira, by the goldsmith of language, Hossein ben Ali, also called El Vaëz u'l Kashifi. And it may be found in the "Anvari Soheili," which are "The Lights of Canopus."...

IN the Name of the Most Merciful God!...I have heard this tradition of Solomon, the unparalleled among kings, for whom all Genii, and Peris, and men, and beasts of earth, and birds of air, and creatures of the deep begirt the loins of their souls with the girdle of obedience, and whose power was measurable only by the hoofs of the horse of the Zephyr, "whose morning course is a month's journey, and whose evening course is also equal to

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a month's journey, upon the swiftest of earthly steeds."

... Now, Solomon being once enthroned upon the summit of the mightiest of mountains, which yet bears his name — the mountain at once overlooking the plains of Iran and the kingdoms of India — all the creatures of the universe gathered to do him honor. The birds of heaven formed a living canopy above him, and the spirits of air ministered unto him. And, as a mist rising from the earth, a perfumed cloud shaped itself before him; and from out the cloud reached a hand, fairer than moonlight, holding a diamond cup in which a strange water made jewel-glimmerings, while a voice sweeter than music spake to him from out the cloud, saying: "The Creator of all — be His nature forever glorified and His power forever honored! — hath sent me to thee, O Solomon, with this cup containing the waters of youth and of life without end. And He hath desired thee to choose freely whether thou wilt or wilt not drink of this draught from the Fountain of Youth. Therefore consider well, O Solomon! Wilt thou drink hereof, and live divinely immortal through ages everlasting, or wilt thou rather remain within the prison of humanity? ... I wait."

Then a deep silence brooded above the place; for Solomon dreamed upon these words, while the perfumed cloud stirred not, and the white hand motionlessly offered the jewel-cup. And so dreaming, he said unto his own heart: "Surely the gold

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of life is good wherewith to purchase many things at the great market of the Resurrection; the plain of life is a rich soil wherein to plant the spice-trees of eternal felicity; and joyless is the black repose of death.... Yet must I ask counsel of the Genii, and the Peris, and the wisest of men, and the beasts of earth, and the birds of air, before I may resolve to drink."

Still the moon-white hand offered the scintillating cup, and the perfumed cloud changed not. Then the Genii, and the Peris, and the wisest of men, and the beasts of earth, and the birds of heaven, all speaking with one voice of agreement, prayed him that he should drink, inasmuch as the well-being of the world reposed upon his living wisdom, and the happiness of all creatures was sustained by the circle of his life as a jewel held within the setting of a ring of gold.

So that Solomon indeed put out his hand, and took the cup from the luminous fingers; and the fingers withdrew again into the odorous cloud. Wondrous were the lights within the water; and there was a glow of rosiness unbroken all about the cup, as of the sempiternal dawn in those islands beyond the Ocean of Shadows, where the sun rises never above the east and there is neither night nor day. But hesitating yet once more before he drank, he questioned again the creatures of the universe, asking: "O ye administering Genii and Peri beings, ye wisest among wise men, ye creatures also of air and of earth, say if there be absent from this

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assembly even one representative of all over whom I hold dominion!"

And they replied: "Master, only Boutimar is not here — Boutimar the wild dove, most loving of all living creatures."

Then Solomon sent Hudh-hudh to seek the wild dove — Hudh-hudh, the bird of gold, created by the witchcraft of Balkis, Queen of Sheba, the sorceress of sorceresses; and the golden bird brought back with him Boutimar, the wild dove, most loving of all living creatures. Then it was that Solomon repeated the words of the song which he had written: "O my dove that dwellest in the clifts of the rock, in the secret hiding-places of the stairs, let me see thy face, let me hear thy voice!... Is it meet that thy lord, Solomon, shall drink of the waters of youth and know the bliss of earthly immortality?"

Then the wild dove, speaking in the tongue of birds known to Solomon only among mortals, asked the prophet-king, saying: "How shall a creature of air answer the source of wisdom? how may so feeble a mind advise thy supernal intelligence? Yet, if I must counsel, let me ask thee, O Solomon, whether the Water of Life brought hither by this perfumed spirit be for thee alone, or for all with whom thy heart might incline thee to share it?"

But Solomon answered: "It hath been sent to only me, nor is there enough within the cup for any other."

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"O prophet of God!" answered Boutimar, in the tongue of birds, "how couldst thou desire to be living alone, when each of thy friends and of thy counselors and of thy children and of thy servants and of all who loved thee were counted with the dead? For all of these must surely drink the bitter waters of death, though thou shouldst drink the Water of Life. Wherefore desire everlasting youth, when the face of the world itself shall be wrinkled with age, and the eyes of the stars shall be closed by the black fingers of Azrael? When the love thou hast sung of shall have passed away like a smoke of frankincense, when the dust of the heart that beat against thine own shall have long been scattered by the four winds of heaven, when the eyes that looked for thy coming shall have become a memory, when the voices grateful to thine ear shall have been eternally stilled, when thy life shall be one oasis in a universal waste of death, and thine eternal existence but a recognition of eternal absence — wilt thou indeed care to live, though the wild dove perish when its mate cometh not?"

And Solomon, without reply, silently put out his arm and gave back the cup, so that the white hand came forth and took it, and withdrew into the odorous cloud, and the cloud dissolved and passed away forever. But upon the prophet-king's rich beard, besprinkled with powder of gold, there appeared another glitter as of clear dew — the diamond dew of the heart, which is tears.

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THE SON OF A ROBBER

... A BUD from the Rose-Garden of the Gulistan, planted in the six hundred and fifty-sixth year of the Hejira by the Magician of Speech, the Sheikh Moslih-Eddin Sadi of Shiraz, and arranged after eight divisions corresponding with the Eight Gates of Paradise.... In the reign of the King of Kings, Abou-Bequer ben Sad, the Most Magnificent, Viceregent of Solomon, Shadow of the Most High God upon Earth.... In the Name of God the Most Merciful.

... IN those days there were robbers who dwelt in the mountain regions of the land, having fortresses above the eagles' nests, so that no army might successfully assail them. Their name weighed as a terror upon the land, and they closed up the ways of the caravans, and wasted the valleys, and overcame even the king's troops by their strength and their fierceness — all being mountain-born and worshipers of devouring fire. So the governors of the mountain provinces held council together, and devised cunning plans by which to allure the robbers from their inaccessible mountain dwelling, so as to destroy them utterly.

Therefore it came to pass that while the robbers were pursuing after a caravan, the bravest troops of the king concealed themselves in the defiles of the mountain, and there in silence awaited the return of the band with many rich spoils and captives of price

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for ransom. And when the robbers returned at night, hard pressed by that greatest enemy of the wary, whose name is Sleep, the Persian soldiers set upon them, and smote them, and bound their arms behind their backs, and drave them as a herd of wild sheep into the city. So they were brought into the presence of the king.

And the king commended the wisdom of the governors of the provinces, saying: "Had ye not thus prevailed against them by craft, the strength of the robbers might have waxed with each day of immunity, until it would have been beyond our power to destroy them. The spring may be closed at its mouth with a small covering; but when it shall have been swollen to a river by long flowing, a man may not cross its current even upon the back of an elephant.... Let each and all of these prisoners be forthwith put to death as robbers are put to death under our law."

But among these robbers there was a youth slender and shapely as a young palm; and the fruit of his adolescence was yet unripe, the verdure of the rose-garden of his cheeks had scarcely begun to bud. And by reason of the beauty of the boy, a kindly vizier bowed his white beard before the steps of the throne, and kissed the footstool of the king, and prayed him with words of intercession: "Hear the prayer of a slave, O Master of the World, Axis of the Circle of Time, Shadow upon Earth of the Most High God!... This child hath never eaten of the

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fruit of life, never hath he enjoyed the loveliness of the flower of youth.... O Master of Kings, thy slave hopes that in thy universal generosity and boundless bounty, thou wilt impose upon thy slave a fresh obligation of gratitude, by sparing the life of this child."...

Kindly was the king's heart, but his mind was keen also and clear as edge of diamond; and he knitted his brows because the discourse seemed to him unwise, and therefore pleased him not: "O vizier, dost thou not know that the influence of the good can make no impression upon the hearts of those whose origin is evil? Hast thou not heard it said that the willow giveth no fruit, however fertilizing the rain of heaven? Shall we extinguish a fire, and leave charcoal embers alight? Shall we destroy only the adult viper, and spare her young? It is better that these people be utterly destroyed, root and branch, race and name."...

But the aged vizier, bowing respectfully, again prayed the king, justly commending the wisdom of his words, but seeking exceptions and parables from the sayings of the wise and the traditions of the prophets: "The words of the Successor of Solomon are wisdom supreme to thy slave; and were this boy indeed raised up by the wicked, he would surely become as they. Yet thy slave believes that were he educated only by the best of men, he might become most virtuous. Nor would thy slave spare aught requisite to adorn the boy's heart and to make

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blossom the garden of his mind.... The prophetical tradition saith: 'There is no child born of woman that is not naturally born into Islam, though his father and mother might afterward make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Gheber.... And even the dog Kitmir, that followed and guarded the Seven Holy Sleepers of Mecca, was able to enter Paradise by seizing with his teeth the hem of their blessed robes."...

Then many other ministers and rulers of provinces, unwisely bewitched by the beauty of the boy, united themselves with the vizier in potent intercession. The king's face moved not, and the shadow remained upon it; but he answered: "I pardon the boy by reason of the weakness of your hearts, yet I perceive no advantage therein. O vizier, bear in mind that the beneficent rains of heaven give radiance to the splendors of the tulip and strength to the venom of serpent-plants. Remember well that the vilest enemy may not be despised, and that the stream now too shallow for the fish may so swell as to carry away the camel with his burthen."...

But the vizier, weeping with joy, took the boy home, and clothed him and fed him, and brought him up as his own sons and as the sons of princes. Masters he procured for him, to make him learned in the knowledge of tongues and of graces and of military accomplishments — in the arts of archery and sword-play and horsemanship, in singing and

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in the musical measurement of speech, in courtesy and truth, above all things, and those high qualities desirable in the service of the King of Kings upon earth. So strong and beautiful he grew up that the gaze of all eyes followed whithersoever he moved, even as the waves all turn their heads to look upon the moon; and all, save only the king, smiled upon him. But the king only frowned when he stood before him, and paid no heed to the compliments uttered concerning the young man. One day, the vizier, in the pride of his happiness, said to the king: "Behold! by the work of thy slave, the boy hath been reclaimed from the ways of his fathers; the fountain of his mind hath been opened by wise teachers, and the garden of his heart blossoms with the flowers of virtuous desire."

But the king only laughed in his beard, and said: "O vizier, the young of the wolf will always be a wolf, even though he be brought up with the children of a man."

... And when the time of two winters had dimmed the recollection of the king's words, it came to pass at last that the young man, riding out alone, met with a band of mountain robbers, and felt his heart moved toward them. They, also, knowing his race by the largeness and fierceness of his eyes, and the eagle-curve of his nostrils, and the signs of the wild blood that made lightnings in his veins, were attracted to him, and spake to him in the mountain-

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tongue of his fathers. And all the fierceness of his fathers returned upon him, with longings for the wind-voices of the peaks, and the madness of leaping water, and the sleeping-places above the clouds where the eagles hatched their young, and the secrets of the unknown caverns, and the altar of flickering fire.... So that he made compact with them; and, treacherously returning, slew the aged vizier together with his sons, and robbed the palace, and fled to the mountains, where he took refuge in his father's ancient fortress, and became a leader of outlaws. And they told the tale to the king.

Then the king, wondering not at all, laughed bitterly and said: "O ye wise fools! how can a good sword be wrought from bad iron? how may education change the hearts of the wicked? Doth not the same rain which nourisheth the rose also nourish the worthless shrubs that grow in salty marshes? How shall a salty waste produce nard? Verily, to do good unto the evil is not less blameworthy than to do evil unto the good."

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A LEGEND OF LOVE

DJEMIL the "Azra" said: "While I live, my heart will love thee; and when I shall be no more, still will my Shadow follow thy Shadow athwart the tombs."...

THOU hast perchance beheld it — the strong white city climbing by terraces far up the mountain-side, with palms swaying in the blue above its citadel towers, and the lake-waters damascened by winds, reflecting, all-quiveringly, its Arabian gates and the golden words of the Prophet shining upon entablatures, and the mosque-domes rounded like eggs of the Rok, and the minarets from which the voice of the muezzin comes to the faithful with dying redness of sunset: "O ye who are about to sleep, commend your souls to Him who never sleeps!"

...Therein also dwelt many Christians — may their bones be ground and the names of them forever blotted out! Yea; all save one, whose name I have indeed forgotten. (But our master the Prophet hath written the name; and it hath not been forgotten by Him who never forgets — though it be the name of a woman!) Now, hard by the walls of the city there is a place of sepulchre for good Moslems, in which thou mayst see two graves, the foot of one being set against the foot of the other; and upon one of these is a monument bearing a turban, while the form of the tumulary stone upon the other

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hath only flowers in relief, and some letters of an obliterated name, wherefore thou mightst know it to be the grave of a woman. And there are cypress-trees more ancient than Islam, making darkness like a summer's night about the place.

...Slender she was as the tulip upon its stalk, and in walking her feet seemed kisses pressed upon the ground. But hadst thou beheld her face unveiled, and the whiteness of her teeth between her brown lips when she smiled!... He was likewise in the summer of his youth; and his love was like the love of the Beni-Azra told of by Sahid Ben-Agba. But she being a Christian maiden and he being a good Mussulman, they could not converse together save by stealth; nor could either dare to let the matter become known unto the parents of the other. For he could not indeed make himself one of the infidel — whose posterity may God blot out! — neither could she, through fear of her people, avow the faith of the Prophet!... Only through the lattice of her window could she betimes converse with him; and with the love of each other it came to pass that both fell grievously ill. As to the youth, indeed, his sickness so wrought upon him that his reason departed, and he long remained as one mad. Then at last, recovering, he departed to another place, even to the city of Damascus — not that he might so forget what he could not wish to forget, but that his strength might return to him.

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Now the parents of the maiden were rich, while the youth was poor. And when the lovers had contrived to send letters one unto the other, she sent to him a hundred dinars, begging him, as he loved her, that he should seek out an artist in that city, and have a likeness of himself painted for her that she might kiss it. "But knowest thou not, beloved," he wrote, "that it is contrary unto our creed; and in the Last Day what wilt thou say unto God when He shall demand of thee to give life unto the image thou hast had wrought?" But she replied: "In the Last Day, O my beloved, I shall answer, Thou knowest, O Most Holy, that Thy creature may not create; yet if it be Thy will to animate this image, I will forever bless Thy name, though Thou condemn me for having loved more than mine own soul the fairest of living images Thou hast made."...

But it came to pass in time that, returning, he fell sick again in the city which I speak of; and lying down to die, he whispered into the ear of his friend: "Never again in this world shall I behold her whom my soul loveth; and I much fear, if I die a Mussulman, lest I should not meet her in the other. Therefore I desire to abjure my faith, and to become a Christian." And so he died. But we buried him among the faithful, forasmuch as his mind must have been much disturbed when he uttered those words.

And the friend of the youth hastened with all

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speed to the place where the young girl dwelt, she being also at the point of death, so grievous was the pain of her heart. Then said she to him: "Never again in this world shall I behold him that my soul loveth; and I much fear if I die a Christian, lest I should not meet him in the other. Therefore I give testimony that there is no other God but God, and that Mahomet is the prophet of God!"

Then the friend whispered unto her what had happened, to her great astonishment. But she only answered: "Bear me to where he rests; and bury me with my feet toward his feet, that I may rise face to face with him at the Day of Judgment!"

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THE KING'S JUSTICE

... PRAISE to the Creator of all, the secret of whose existence is unknown; who hath marked all His creatures with an imprint, though there be no visible imprint of Himself; who is the Soul of the soul; who is hidden in that which is hidden!... Though the firmament open its myriad million eyes in the darkness, it may not behold Him. Yet does the Sun nightly bow his face of flame below the west, in worship; monthly the Moon faints away in astonishment at His greatness.... Eternally the Ocean lifts its thousand waves to proclaim His glory; Fire seeks to rise to Him; Winds whisper of His mystery.... And in the balance of His justice even a sigh hath weight....

IN the first recital of the First Book of the Gulistan, treating of the Conduct of Kings, it is said that a Persian monarch condemned with his own lips a prisoner of war, and commanded that he be put to death.

And the prisoner, being still in the force of youth and the fullness of strength, thought within his heart of all the days he might otherwise have lived, of all the beauty he might have caressed, of all the happiness he might have known, of all the hopes unbudded that might have ripened into blossom for him. Thus regretting, and seeing before him only the blind and moonless night of death, and considering that the fair sun would never rise for him again, he cursed the king in the language of male-

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diction of his own country, loudly and with mad passion. For it is a proverb: "Whosoever washeth his hands of life, truly saith all that is within his heart."

Now the king, hearing the vehemence of the man, but nowise understanding the barbaric tongue which he spoke, questioned his first vizier, asking, "What saith the dog?"

But the vizier, being a kindly-hearted man, answered thus: "O Master, he repeateth the words of the Holy Book, the words of the Prophet of God concerning those who repress their anger and pardon injury, the beloved of Allah."

And the king, hearing and believing these words, felt his heart moved within him; the fire of his anger died out, and the spirit of pity entered into him, so that he revoked his own command and forgave the man, and ordered that he should be set free.

But there was another vizier also with the king, a malevolent and cunning-eyed man, knowing all languages, and ever seeking to obtain elevation by provoking the misfortune of others. This vizier, assuming therefore an austere face like to that of a praying dervish, loudly exclaimed: "Ill doth it become trusted ministers of a king, men of honorable place, such as we are, to utter in the presence of our master even so much as one syllable of untruth. Know, therefore, O Master, that the first vizier hath untruthfully interpreted the prisoner's words; for

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that wretch uttered no single pious word, but evil and blasphemous language concerning thee, cursing his king in the impotency of his rage."

But the king's brows darkened when he heard the words; and turning terrible eyes upon the second vizier, he said unto him: "More pleasant to my ears was the lie uttered by my first vizier, than the truth spoken by thy lips; for he indeed uttered a lie with a good and merciful purpose, whereas thou didst speak the truth for a wicked and malignant purpose. Better the lie told for righteous ends than the truth which provoketh evil! Neither shall my pardon be revoked; but as for thee, let me see thy face no more!"

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TRADITIONS RETOLD FROM THE TALMUD

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TRADITIONS RETOLD FROM THE TALMUD

* * *

A LEGEND OF RABBA

WHICH is in the Gemara of the Berachoth of Babylon.... Concerning the interpretation of dreams, it hath been said by Rabbi Benaa: "There were in Jerusalem twenty-four interpreters of dreams; and I, having dreamed a dream, did ask the explanation thereof from each of the twenty-four; and, notwithstanding that each gave me a different interpretation, the words of all were fulfilled, even in conformity with the saying: 'All dreams are accomplished according to the interpretation thereof.'"... We are Thine, O King of all; Thine also are our dreams....

MIGHTY was the knowledge of the great Rabba, to whom the mysteries of the Book Yetzirah were known in such wise, that, being desirous once to try his brother, Rabbi Zira, he did create out of dust a living man, and sent the man to Zira with a message in writing. But inasmuch as the man had not been born of woman, nor had had breathed into him God's holy spirit of life, he could not speak. Therefore, when Rabbi Zira had spoken to him and observed that he did not reply, the Rabbi whispered into his ear: "Thou wert begotten by witchcraft; return to thy form of dust!" And the man crum-

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bled before his sight into shapelessness; and the wind bore the shapelessness away, as smoke is dissipated by a breath of storm. But Rabbi Zira marveled greatly at the power of the great Rabba.

Not so wise, nevertheless, was Rabba as was Bar-Hedia in the interpretation of dreams; and Bar-Hedia was consulted by the multitudes in those parts. But he interpreted unto them good or evil only as they paid him or did not pay him. According to many Rabbonim, to dream of a well signifieth peace; to dream of a camel, the pardon of iniquities; to dream of goats, a year of fertility; to dream of any living creature, save only the monkey and the elephant, is good; and these also are good if they appear harnessed or bound. But Bar-Hedia interpreted such good omens in the contrary way, unless well paid by the dreamer; and it was thought passing strange that the evils which he predicted never failed of accomplishment.

Now one day the Rabbonim Abayi and Rabba went to consult Bar-Hedia the interpreter, seeing that they had both dreamed the same dream. Abayi paid him one zouz, but Rabba paid him nothing.

And they asked Bar-Hedia, both together saying: "Interpret unto us this dream which we have dreamed. Sleeping, it seemed to us that we beheld a scroll unrolled under a great light, and we did both read therein these words, which are in the fifth book of Moses":

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Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof.... Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people.... Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in....

Then Bar-Hedia, the interpreter, said to Abayi who had paid him one zouz: "For thee this dream bodeth good. The verse concerning the ox signifies thou wilt prosper so wondrously that for very joy thou shalt be unable to eat. Thy sons and daughters shall be married in other lands, so that thou wilt be separated from them without grief. knowing them to be virtuous and content.

"But for thee, Rabba, who didst pay me nothing, this dream portendeth evil. Thou shalt be afflicted in such wise that for grief thou canst not eat; thy daughters and sons shall be led into captivity. Abayi shall 'carry out much seed into the field'; but the second part of the verse, 'Thou shalt gather but little,' refers to thee."

Then they asked him again, saying: "But in our dream we also read these verses, thus disposed":

Thou shalt have olive trees, and thou shalt not anoint thyself with oil.... All the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of thee.

Then said Bar-Hedia: "For thee, Rabbi Abayi, the words signify that thou shalt be prosperous and much honored; but for thee, Rabba, who didst pay me nothing, they portend evil only. Thou shalt

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have no profit in thy labor; thou shalt be falsely accused, and by reason of the accusation, avoided as one guilty of crime."

Still Rabba, speaking now for himself alone, continued: "But I dreamed also that I beheld the exterior door of my dwelling fall down, and that my teeth fell out of my mouth. And I dreamed that I saw two doves fly away, and two radishes growing at my feet."

Again Bar-Hedia answered, saying: "For thee, Rabba, who didst pay me nothing, these things signify evil. The falling of thine outer door augurs the death of thy wife; the loss of thy teeth signifies that thy sons and daughters shall likewise die in their youth. The flight of the doves means that thou shalt be divorced from two other wives, and the two radishes of thy dream foretell that thou wilt receive two blows which thou mayest not return."

And all things thus foretold by Bar-Hedia came to pass. So that Rabba's wife died, and that he was arrested upon suspicion of having robbed the treasury of the king, and that the people shunned him as one guilty. Also while seeking to separate two men fighting, who were blind, they struck him twice unknowingly, so that he could not resent it. And misfortunes came to Rabba even as to Job; yet he could resign himself to all save only the death of his young wife, the daughter of Rabbi Hisda.

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At last Rabba paid a great sum to Bar-Hedia, and told him of divers awful dreams which he had had. This time Bar-Hedia predicted happiness for him, and riches, and honors, all of which came to pass according to the words of the interpreter, whereat Rabba marveled exceedingly.

Now it happened while Rabba and Bar-Hedia were voyaging one day together, that Bar-Hedia let fall his magical book, by whose aid he uttered all his interpretations of dreams; and Rabba, hastily picking it up, perceived these words in the beginning: "All dreams shall be fulfilled according to the interpretation of the interpreter." So that Rabba, discovering the wicked witchcraft of the man, cursed him, saying: "Raca! For all else could I forgive thee, save for the death of my beloved wife, the daughter of Rabbi Hisda! O thou impious magician! take thou my malediction!" ...

Thereupon Bar-Hedia, terrified, went into voluntary exile among the Romans, vainly hoping thus to expiate his sin, and flee from the consuming power of Rabba's malediction.

Thus coming to Rome, he interpreted dreams daily before the gate of the king's treasury; and he did much evil, as he was wont to do before. One day the king's treasurer came to him, saying: "I dreamed a dream in which it seemed to me that a needle had entered my finger. Interpret me this dream."

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But Bar-Hedia said only, "Give me a zouz!" And because he would not give it, Bar-Hedia told him nothing.

And another day the treasurer came, saying: "I dreamed a dream in which it seemed that worms devoured two of my fingers. Interpret me this dream."

But Bar-Hedia said only, "Give me a zouz!" And because he would not give it, Bar-Hedia told him nothing.

Yet the third time the treasurer came, saying: "I dreamed a dream in which it seemed to me that worms devoured my whole right hand. Interpret me this dream."

Then Bar-Hedia mocked him, saying: "Go, look thou at the king's stores of silk entrusted to thy keeping; for worms have by this time destroyed them utterly."... And it was even as Bar-Hedia said.

Thereupon the king waxed wroth, and ordered the decapitation of the treasurer. But he, protesting, said: "Wherefore slay only me, since the Jew that was first aware of the presence of the worms, said nothing concerning it?"

So they brought in Bar-Hedia, and questioned him. But he mocked the treasurer, and said: "It was because thou wast too avaricious to pay me one zouz that the king's silk hath been destroyed."

Whereupon the Romans, being filled with fury, bent down the tops of two young cedar trees, one

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toward the other, and fastened them so with a rope. And they bound Bar-Hedia's right leg to one tree-top, and his left leg to the other; and thereafter severed the rope suddenly with a sword. And the two cedars, as suddenly leaping back to their natural positions, tore asunder the body of Bar-Hedia into equal parts, so that his entrails were spilled out, and even his skull, splitting into halves, emptied of its brain.

For the malediction of the great Rabba was upon him.

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...A TRADITION of Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, which is preserved within the Treatise Sheviith of the "Talmud Yerushalmi."... Is it not said in the Sanhedrin that there are four classes who do not enter into the presence of the Holy One? — blessed be He! — and among these four are scorners reckoned....

CONCERNING Rabbi Simon ben Yochai many marvelous things are narrated, both in that Talmud which is of Babylon and in that which is of Jerusalem. And of these things none are more wonderful than the tradition regarding the fashion after which he was wont to rebuke the impudence of mockers.

It was this same Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, who was persecuted by the Romans, because he had made little of their mighty works, saying that they had constructed roads only to move their wicked armies more rapidly, that they had builded bridges only to collect tolls, that they had erected aqueducts and baths for their own pleasure only, and had established markets for no other end than the sustenance of iniquity. For these words Rabbi Simon was condemned to die; wherefore he, together with his holy son, fled away, and they hid themselves in a cave. Therein they dwelt for twelve long years, so that their garments would have

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crumbled into dust had they not laid them aside saving only at the time of prayer; and they buried themselves up to their necks in the sand during their hours of slumber and of meditation. But within the cave the Lord created for them a heavenly carob-tree, which daily bore fruit for their nourishment; and the Holy One — blessed be He! — also created unending summer within the cave, lest they should be afflicted by cold. So they remained until the Prophet Elijah descended from heaven to tell them that the Emperor of the Romans had died the death of the idolatrous, and that there remained for them no peril in the world. But during those many years of meditation, the holiness of the Rabbi and of his son had become as the holiness of those who stand with faces wing-veiled about the throne of God; and the world had become unfitted for their sojourn. Coming forth from the cave, therefore, a fierce anger filled them at the sight of men ploughing and reaping in the fields; and they cried out against them, saying: "Lo! these people think only of the things of earth, and neglect the things of eternity."

Then were the lands and the people toiling thereupon utterly consumed by the fire of their eyes, even as Sodom and Gomorrah were blasted from the face of the earth. But the Bath-Kol — the Voice of the Holy One — rebuked them from heaven, saying: "What! have ye come forth only to destroy this world which I have made? Get

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ye back within the cavern!" And they returned into the cave for another twelve months — making in all thirteen years of sojourn therein — until the Bath-Kol spake again, and uttered their pardon, and bade them return into the world. All of which is written in the Treatise Shabbath of Seder Moed of the Talmud Babli.

Now in the Talmud Yerushalmi we are told that after Rabbi Simon ben Yochai had departed from the cave, he resolved to purify all the land of Tiberias. For while within the cave, his body had become sore smitten with ulcers, and the waters of Tiberias had healed them. Even as he had found purification in Tiberias, so also, he declared, should Tiberias find in him purification. And these things he said within the hearing of mockers, who feared his eyes, yet who among themselves laughed him to scorn.

But Rabbi Simon sat down before the city of Tiberias, and he took lupines, and cut up the lupines into atoms, and uttered over them words whereof no living man save himself knew the interpretation. (For the meaning of such words is seldom known by men, seeing that but few are known even by the Angels and the Demons.) Having done these things, the Rabbi arose and walked over the land, scattering the lupines about him as a sower scatters seed. And wherever the lupines fell, the bones of the dead arose from below and came to the surface of the ground, so that the people could take them away

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and bury them in a proper place. Thus was the ground purified, not only of the bones of the idolaters and the giants who erst dwelt in the place of promise, but likewise of the bones of all animals and living beings which had there died since the coming of Israel.

Now there was a certain wicked doubter, a Samaritan, who, desiring to bring confusion to Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, secretly buried an unclean corpse in a place already purified. And the Samaritan came cunningly to Rabbi Simon, saying "Methought thou didst purify such a spot in my field; yet is there an unclean body there — the body of a man. Surely thy wisdom hath failed thee, or mayhap thy magic hath some defect in it? Come thou with me!" So he took with him Rabbi Simon, and dug up the ground, and showed to him the unclean corpse, and laughed in his beard.

But Rabbi Simon, knowing by divine inspiration what had been done, fixed his eyes upon the wicked face of the man, and said: "Verily, such a one as thou deserveth not to dwell among the living, but rather to exchange places with the dead!" And no sooner had the words been uttered than the body of the dead man arose, and his flesh became pure, and the life returned to his eyes and his heart; while the wicked Samaritan became a filthy corpse, so that the worms came from his nostrils and his ears.

Yet, as he went upon his way, Rabbi Simon passed an inhabited tower without the city; and a

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voice from the upper chamber of the tower mocked him, crying aloud: "Hither cometh that Bar-Yochai, who thinketh himself able to purify Tiberias!" Now the mocker was himself a most learned man.

"I swear unto thee," answered Rabbi Simon — "I swear unto thee that Tiberias shall be made pure in spite of such as thou, and their mockings."

And even as the holy Rabbi spoke, the mocker who stood within the chamber of the tower utterly crumbled into a heap of bones; and from the bones a writhing smoke ascended — the smoke of the wrath of the Lord, as it is written: "The anger of the Lord shall smoke!"...

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ESTHER'S CHOICE

A STORY of Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, which is related in the holy Midrash Shir-Hasirim of the holy Midrashim.... Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE!...

IN those days there lived in Sidon, the mighty city, a certain holy Israelite possessing much wealth, and having the esteem of all who knew him, even among the Gentiles. In all Sidon there was no man who had so beautiful a wife; for the comeliness of her seemed like that of Sarah, whose loveliness illumined all the land of Egypt.

Yet for this rich one there was no happiness: the cry of the nursling had never been heard in his home, the sound of a child's voice had never made sunshine within his heart. And he heard voices of reproach betimes, saying: "Do not the Rabbis teach that if a man have lived ten years with his wife and have no issue, then he should divorce her, giving her the marriage portion prescribed by law; for he may not have been found worthy to have his race perpetuated by her?"... But there were others who spake reproach of the wife, believing that her beauty had made her proud, and that her reproach was but the punishment of vainglory.

And at last, one morning, Rabbi Simon ben Yochai was aware of two visitors within the antechamber of his dwelling, the richest merchant of

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Sidon and his wife, greeting the holy man with "Salem aleikoum!" The Rabbi looked not upon the woman's face, for to gaze even upon the heel of a woman is forbidden to holy men; yet he felt the sweetness of her presence pervading all the house like the incense of the flowers woven by the hands of the Angel of Prayer. And the Rabbi knew that she was weeping.

Then the husband arose and spake:

"Lo! it is now more than a time of ten years since I was wedded to Esther, I being then twenty years of age, and desirous to obey the teaching that he who remaineth unmarried after twenty transgresseth daily against God. Esther, thou knowest, O Rabbi, was the sweetest maiden in Sidon; and to me she hath ever been a most loving and sweet wife, so that I could find no fault with her; neither is there any guile in her heart.

"I have since then become a rich Israelite; the men of Tyre know me, and the merchants of Carthage swear by my name. I have many ships, bearing me ivory and gold of Ophir and jewels of great worth from the East; I have vases of onyx and cups of emeralds curiously wrought, and chariots and horses — even so that no prince hath more than I. And this I owe to the blessing of the Holy One — blessed be He! — and to Esther, my wife, also, who is a wise and valiant woman, and cunning in advising.

"Yet, O Rabbi, gladly would I have given all

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my riches that I might obtain one son! that I might be known as a father in Israel. The Holy One — blessed be He! — hath not vouchsafed me this thing; so that I have thought me found unworthy to have children by so fair and good a woman. I pray thee, therefore, that thou wilt give legal enactment to a bill of separation; for I have resolved to give Esther a bill of divorcement, and a goodly marriage portion also, that the reproach may so depart from us in the sight of Israel."

And Rabbi Simon ben Yochai stroked thoughtfully the dim silver of his beard. A silence as of the Shechinah fell upon the three. Faintly, from afar, came floating to their ears the sea-like murmuring of Sidon's commerce.... Then spake the Rabbi; and Esther, looking at him, thought that his eyes smiled, although this holy man was never seen to smile with his lips. Yet it may be that his eyes smiled, seeing into their hearts: "My son, it would be a scandal in Israel to do as thou dost purpose, hastily and without becoming announcement; for men might imagine that Esther had not been a good wife, or thou a too exacting husband! It is not lawful to give cause for scorn. Therefore go to thy home, make ready a goodly feast, and invite thither all thy friends and the friends of thy wife, and those who were present at thy wedding, and speak to them as a good man to good men, and let them understand wherefore thou dost this thing, and

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that in Esther there is no fault. Then return to me on the morrow, and I will grant thee the bill."

So a great feast was given, and many guests came; among them, all who had attended the wedding of Esther, save, indeed, such as Azrael had led away by the hand. There was much good wine; the meats smoked upon platters of gold, and cups of onyx were placed at the elbow of each guest. And the husband spake lovingly to his wife in the presence of all, saying: "Esther, we have lived together lovingly many years; and if we must now separate, thou knowest it is not because I do not love thee, but only because it hath not pleased the Most Holy to bless us with children. And in token that I love thee and wish thee all good, know that I desire thee to take away from my house whatever thou desirest, whether it be gold or jewels beyond price."

So the wine went round, and the night passed in mirth and song, until the heads of the guests grew strangely heavy, and there came a buzzing in their ears as of innumerable bees, and their beards ceased to wag with laughter, and a deep sleep fell upon them.

Then Esther summoned her handmaids, and said to them: "Behold my husband sleeps heavily! I go to the house of my father; bear him thither also as he sleepeth."

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And awaking in the morning the husband found himself in a strange chamber and in a strange house. But the sweetness of a woman's presence, and the ivory fingers that caressed his beard, and the softness of the knees that pillowed his head, and the glory of the dark eyes that looked into his own awakening,— these were not strange; for he knew that his head was resting in the lap of Esther. And bewildered with the grief-born dreams of the night, he cried out, "Woman, what hast thou done?"

Then, sweeter than the voice of doves among the fig-trees, came the voice of Esther: "Didst thou not bid me, husband, that I should choose and take away from thy house whatsoever I most desired? And I have chosen thee, and have brought thee hither, to my father's home, . . . loving thee more than all else in the world. Wilt thou drive me from thee now?" And he could not see her face for tears of love; yet he heard her voice speaking on — speaking the golden words of Ruth, which are so old yet so young to the hearts of all that love: "Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will also go; and whithersoever thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. And the Angel of Death only may part us; for thou art all in all to me." . . .

And in the golden sunlight at the doorway suddenly stood, like a statue of Babylonian silver, the grand gray figure of Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, lifting his hands in benediction.

"Schmah Israel! — the Lord our God, who is

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One, bless ye with everlasting benediction! May your hearts be welded by love, as gold with gold by the cunning of goldsmiths! May the Lord, who coupleth and setteth the single in families, watch over ye! The Lord make this valiant woman even as Rachel and as Lia, who built up the house of Israel! And ye shall behold your children and your children's children in the House of the Lord!"

Even so the Lord blessed them; and Esther became as the fruitful vine, and they saw their children's children in Israel. Forasmuch as it is written: "He will regard the prayer of the destitute."

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THE DISPUTE IN THE HALACHA

...Told of in the Book "Bava-Metzia; or, The Middle Gate" of the Holy Shas....The Lord loveth the gates that are marked with the Halacha more than the synagogues and the schools.

Now, in those days there was a dispute between the Mishnic Doctors and Rabbi Eliezer concerning the legal cleanliness of a certain bake-oven, as is written in the Bava-Metzia of the Talmud. For while all the others held the oven to be unclean according to the Halacha, Rabbi Eliezer declared that it was clean; and all their arguments he overthrew, and all their objections he confuted, although they would not suffer themselves to be convinced. Then did Rabbi Eliezer at last summon a carob-tree to bear witness to his interpretation of the law; and the carob-tree uprooted itself, and rose in air with the clay trickling from its roots, and moved through air to the distance of four hundred yards, and replanted itself, trembling, in the soil.

But the Doctors of the Mishna, being used to marvelous things, were little moved; and they said: "We may not admit the testimony of a carob-tree. Shall a carob-tree discourse to us regarding the Halacha? Will a carob-tree teach us the law?"

Then said Rabbi Eliezer to the brook that muttered its unceasing prayer without: "Bear me wit-

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ness, O thou running water!" And the rivulet changed the course of its current; its waters receded, and, flowing back to their fountain-head, left naked the pebbles of their bed to dry under the sun.

But the Disciples of the Sages still held to their first opinion, saying: "Shall a brook prattle to us of law? Shall we hearken to the voice of running water rather than to the voice of the Holy One — blessed be He! — and of His servant Moses?"

Then Rabbi Eliezer, lifting his eyes toward the walls above, bearing holy words written upon them, cried out: "Yet bear me witness also, ye consecrated walls, that I have decided aright in this matter!" And the walls quivered, bent inward, curved like a bellying sail in the moment of a changing wind, impended above the hands of the Rabbis, and would have fallen had not Rabbi Joshuah rebuked them, saying: "What is it to you if the Rabbis do wrangle in the Halacha? Would ye crush us? Be ye still!" So the walls, obeying Rabbi Joshuah, would not fall; but neither would they return to their former place, forasmuch as they obeyed Rabbi Eliezer also — so that they remain toppling even unto this day.

Then, seeing that their hearts were hardened against him even more than the stones of the building, Rabbi Eliezer cried out: "Let the Bath-Kol decide between us!" Whereupon the college shook to its foundation; and a Voice from heaven answered, saying: "What have ye to do with Rabbi Eliezer?

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for in all things the Halacha is even according to his decision!"

But Rabbi Joshuah stood upon his feet fearlessly in the midst, and said: "It is not lawful that even a Voice from heaven should be regarded by us. For Thou, O God, didst long ago write down in the law which Thou gavest upon Sinai, saying, 'Thou shalt follow the multitude.'" And they would not hearken unto Rabbi Eliezer; but they did excommunicate him, and did commit all his decisions regarding the law to be consumed with fire.

[Now some have it that Rabbi Nathan testified that the Prophet Elijah declared unto him that God Himself was deceived in this matter, and acknowledged error in His decision, saying: "My children have vanquished me! my children have prevailed against me!" But as we also know that in punishment for the excommunication of Rabbi Eliezer a third portion of all the barley and of the olives and of the wheat in the whole world was smitten with blight, we may well believe that Rabbi Eliezer was not in error.]

Now, while yet under sentence of excommunication, Rabbi Eliezer fell grievously ill; and the Rabbonim knew nothing of it. Yet such was his learning, that Rabbi Akiva and all the disciples of the latter came unto him to seek instruction. . . . Then Rabbi Eliezer, rising upon his elbow, asked them, "Wherefore came ye hither?"

"We came that we might learn the Halacha," answered Akiva.

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"But wherefore came ye not sooner?"

And they answered, "Because we had not time."

Then Rabbi Eliezer, feeling wroth at the reply, said to them also: "Verily, if ye die a natural death, I shall marvel greatly. And as for thee, Akiva, thy death shall be the worst of all! It is well for thee that I do not give thee my malediction, seeing thou hast dared to say that one may not have time to learn the law!"

And Rabbi Eliezer, folding his arms upon his breast to die, continued: "Woe, woe is me! Woe unto these two arms of mine, that they are now even as two scrolls of the law rolled up, whereof the contents are hidden! Had ye waited upon me before, ye might have learned many strange things; and now my knowledge must perish with me! Much have I learned, and much have I taught, yet always without diminishing the knowledge of my Rabbis by even so much as the waters of the ocean might be diminished by the lapping of a dog!"...

And he continued to speak to them: "Now, over and above all those things, I did expound three thousand Halachoth in regard to the growing of Egyptian cucumbers; and yet none save only Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph ever asked me so much as one question regarding them!...We were walking on the road between the fields, when he asked me to instruct him regarding Egyptian cucumbers. Then I uttered but one word; and, behold! the fields forthwith became full of Egyptian cucumbers. He

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asked me concerning the gathering of them. I uttered but one word; and, lo! all the cucumbers did gather themselves into one place before me." ...

And even as Rabbi Eliezer was thus speaking, his soul departed from him; and Rabbi Akiva with all his disciples mourned bitterly for him and for themselves, seeing they had indeed come too late to learn the law.

But the prediction of Rabbi Eliezer was fulfilled. ... For it came to pass, when Rabbi Akiva had become a most holy man, and marvelously learned, that the Romans forbade the teaching of the law in Israel; and Rabbi Akiva persisted in teaching it publicly to the people, saying: "If we suffer so much by the will of the Holy One — blessed be He! — while studying the law, how much indeed shall we suffer while neglecting it!"

So they led him out to execution, and tortured him with tortures unspeakable. Now it was just at that hour when the prayer must be said: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is One."

And even while they were tearing his flesh with combs of iron, Rabbi Akiva uttered the holy words and died. And there came a mighty Voice from heaven, crying: "Blessed art thou, O Rabbi Akiva, for thy soul and the word ONE left thy body together!"

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RABBI YOCHANAN BEN ZACHAI

THERE is in Heaven a certain living creature which hath letters upon its forehead. And by day these letters, which are brighter than the sun, form the word TRUTH, whereby the angels know that it is day. But when evening cometh, the letters, self-changing, do shape themselves into the word FAITH, whereby the angels know that the night cometh....

Now Hillel the Great, who gathered together the Sedarim of the Talmud, and who was also the teacher of that Jesus the Gentiles worship, had eighty other disciples who became holy men. Of these, thirty were indeed so holy that the Shechinah rested upon them even as upon Moses, so that their faces gave out light; and rays like beams of the sun streamed from their temples.

And of thirty others it is said their holiness was as the holiness of Joshua, the son of Nun, being worthy that the sun should stand still at their behest. And the remaining twenty, of whom the greatest was Rabbi Jonathan ben Uzziel, and the least of all Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai, were held to be only of middling worth. Yet there is now not one worthy to compare with the least of them, seeing that Rabbi Yochanan was holier than living man to-day.

For, humble as he was, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai was deeply learned in the Scriptures — in

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the Mishna and the Gemara and the Midrashim — in the Kabbalah, the rules of Gematria, of Notricon, and of Temurah — in the five mystic alphabets, Atbash, Atbach, Albam, Aiakbechar, Tashrak — in legends and the lesser laws and the niceties — in the theories of the moon, in the language of angels and the whispering of palm-trees and the speech of demons. And if all the seas were ink, and all the reeds that shake by rivers were pens, and all the men of the earth were scribes, never could they write down all that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai had learned, nor even so much of it as he taught in his lifetime, which endured for the period of one hundred and twenty years. Yet he was the least of all the disciples of Hillel.

Of the years of his life the first forty he devoted to worldly things, especially to commerce, that he might earn enough to enable him to devote unto good works the remainder of the time allotted him. And the next forty years he devoted to study, becoming so learned that he was indeed accused of being a magician, as were also those Rabbis who, by combination of the letters of the Name Ineffable, did create living animals and fruits — as were also Rav Oshayah and Rav Chaneanah, who by study of the Book Yetzirah (which is the Book of Creation) did create for themselves a calf, and did eat thereof.

And the last forty years of his most holy life Rabbi Yochanan gave to teaching the people.

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Now, as it is related in the Book Bava Bathra, in Seder Nezikin of the Talmud, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai did upon one occasion explain before a vain disciple the words of the Prophet Isaiah. And so explaining he said: "The Most Holy — blessed be His name forever! — shall take precious stones and pearls, each measuring thirty cubits by thirty cubits, and shall cut and polish them till they measure twenty cubits by ten cubits each, and shall set them in the gates of Jerusalem."

Then the vain and foolish disciple, the son of Impudence, laughed loudly, and with mockery in his voice said: "What man hath ever seen an emerald or a diamond, a ruby or a pearl, even so large as the egg of a small bird? and wilt thou indeed tell us that there be jewels thirty cubits by thirty?" But Rabbi Yochanan returned no answer; and the disciple, mocking, departed.

Now, some days after these things happened, that wicked disciple went upon a voyage; for he was in commerce and a great driver of bargains, and known in many countries for his skill in bartering and his ability in finding objects of price. Now, while in his vessel, when the sailors slumbered, waiting to raise the anchor at dawn, it was given to that wicked disciple to see a great light below the waters. And looking down he saw mighty angels in the depths of the sea, quarrying monstrous diamonds and emeralds, and opening prodigious shells to obtain enormous pearls. And the eyes of

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the angels were fixed upon him, even as they worked below the water in that awful light. Then a dreadful fear came upon him, so that his knees smote one against another, and his teeth fell out; and in obedience to a power that moved his tongue against his will, he cried aloud: "For what are those diamonds and those mighty emeralds? For what are those monstrous pearls?" And a Voice answered him from the deep, "For the gates of Jerusalem!"

And having returned from his voyage, the disciple hastened with all speed to the place where Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai was teaching, and told him that which he had seen, and vowed that the words of Rabbi Yochanan should nevermore be doubted by him.

But the Rabbi, seeing into his heart, and beholding the blackness of the wickedness within it, answered in a voice of thunder: "Raca! hadst thou not seen them, thou wouldst even now mock the words of the sages!" And with a single glance of his eye he consumed that wicked disciple as a dry leaf is consumed by flame, reducing the carcass of his body to a heap of smoking ashes as though it had been smitten by the lightning of the Lord.

And the people marveled exceedingly. But Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai, paying no heed to the white ashes smoking at his feet, continued to explain unto his disciples the language of palm-trees and of demons.

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A TRADITION OF TITUS

...WHICH is in the Book "Gittin" of the Talmud.... Before Titus the world was like unto the eyeball of man; the ocean being as the white, the world as the black, the pupil thereof Jerusalem, and the image within the pupil the Temple of the Lord....

VERILY hath it been said, in Chullin of the Holy Shas, that "sixty iron mines are suspended in the sting of a gnat."

For in those days Titus — may his ears be made into sockets for the hinges of Gehenna to turn upon! — came from Rome with his idolaters, and laid siege to the Holy City, and destroyed it, and bore away the virgins into captivity. He who had not beheld Jerusalem before that day had not seen the glory of Israel.

There were three hundred and ninety-four synagogues, and three hundred and ninety-four courts of law, and the same number of academies for the youth....When the gates of the temple were opened, the roar of their golden hinges was heard at the distance of eight Sabbath days' journey.... The Veil of the Holy of Holies was woven by eighty-two myriads of virgins; three hundred priests were needed to draw it, and three hundred to lave it when soiled. But Titus — be his name accursed forever! — wrapped up the sacred vessels in it, and,

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putting them in a ship, set sail for the city of Rome....

Scarcely had he departed beyond sight of the land when a great storm arose — the deeps made visible their darkness, the waves showed their teeth! And an exceeding great fear came upon the mariners, and they cried out, "It is the Elohim!"

But Titus, mocking, lifted his voice against Heaven, and the thunders, and the lightnings, and the mutterings of the sea, exclaiming: "Lo! this God of Jews hath no power save on water! Pharaoh He drowned; Sisera He drowned also; even now He seeketh to drown me with my legions! If He be mighty, and not afraid to strive with me on land, let Him rather await me on solid earth, and there see whether He be strong enough to prevail against me." (Now Sisera, indeed, was not drowned; but Titus, being ignorant and an idolater, spake falsely.)

Then burst forth a splendor of white fire from the darkness of the clouds; and deeper than the thunder a Voice answered unto him: "O thou wicked one, son of a wicked man and grandson of Esau the wicked, go thou ashore! Lo! I have a creature awaiting thee, which is but little and insignificant in my world; go thou and fight with it!"

And the tempest ceased.

So Titus and his legions landed after many days upon the shore of the land called Italy — the shore that vibrated forever to the sound of the mighty city of Rome, whereof the Voice was heard unto

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the four ends of the earth, and the din whereof deafened Rabbi Yehoshuah even at the distance of a hundred and twenty miles. For in Rome there were three hundred and sixty-five streets, and in each street three hundred and sixty-five palaces, and leading up to the pillared portico of each palace a marble flight of three hundred and sixty-five steps.

But no sooner had the Emperor Titus placed his foot upon the shore than there attacked him a gnat! And the gnat flew up his nostrils, and entered into his wicked brain, and gnawed it, and tortured him with unspeakable torture. And he could obtain no cessation of his anguish; neither was there any physician in Rome who could do aught to relieve him. So the gnat abode in his brain for seven years, and the face of Titus became, for everlasting pain, as the face of a man in hell.

Now, after Titus had vainly sacrificed unto all the obscene gods of the Romans, it came to pass that he heard one day, within a blacksmith's shop, the sound of the hammer descending upon the anvil; and the sound was grateful to his ears as the harping of David unto the hearing of Saul, and the anguish presently departed from him. Then, thinking unto himself, he exclaimed, "Lo! I have found relief"; and having offered sacrifices unto the Smith-god, he ordered the smith to be brought to his palace, together with anvils and hammers. And he paid the

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smith four zouzim a day — as money is reckoned in Israel — to hammer for him.

But the smith could not hammer unceasingly; and whenever he stopped the pain returned, and the gnat tormented exceedingly. So other smiths were sent for; and at last a Jewish smith, who was a slave. To him Titus would pay nothing, notwithstanding he had paid the Gentiles; for he said, "It is enough payment for thee to behold thy enemy suffer!"

Yet thirty days more; and no sound of hammers could lessen the agony of the gnawing of the gnat, and Titus knew that he must die.

Then he bade his family that they should burn his body after he was dead, and collect the ashes, and send out seven ships to scatter the ashes upon the waves of the Seven Seas, lest the God of Israel should resurrect his body at the Day of udgment.

[But it is written in Midrash Kohelet, of the holy Midrashim, that Hadrian — may his name be blotted out! — once asked Rabbi Joshua ben Chanania, "From what shall the body be reconstructed at the Last Day?" And the Rabbi answered, "From Luz in the backbone." When Hadrian demanded proof, the Rabbi took Luz, the little bone of the spine, and immersed it in water, and it was not softened. He put it into the fire, and it was not consumed. He put it into a mill, and it could not be ground. He hammered it upon an anvil; but the hammer was broken, and the anvil split asunder.

Therefore the desire of Titus shall not prevail; and the Lord will surely reconstruct his body for punishment out of Luz in the backbone!]

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But before they burned the corpse of Titus they opened his skull and looked into his brain, that they might find the gnat.

Now the gnat was as big as a swallow, and weighed two selas, as weight is reckoned in Israel. And they found that its claws were of brass, and the jaws of its mouth were of iron!

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FANTASTICS AND OTHER FANCIES

EDITED BY

CHARLES WOODWARD HUTSON

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There are tropical lilies which are venomous, but they are more beautiful than the frail and icy-white lilies of the North.

LAFCADIO HEARN

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INTRODUCTION

"I AM conscious they are only trivial," wrote Lafcadio Hearn from New Orleans in 1880 to his friend H. E. Krehbiel, speaking of the weird little sketches he was publishing from time to time in the columns of the *Daily Item*, the New Orleans newspaper which first gave him employment in the city where he spent the ten years from 1877 to 1887.

"But I fancy," he goes on, "that the idea of the fantastics is artistic. They are my impressions of the strange life of New Orleans. They are dreams of a tropical city. There is one twin-idea running through them all — Love and Death. And these figures embody the story of life here, as it impresses me. I hope to be able to take a trip to Mexico in the summer just to obtain literary material, sun-paint, tropical color, etc. There are tropical lilies which are venomous, but they are more beautiful than the frail and icy-white lilies of the North. Tell me if you received a fantastic founded upon the story of Ponce de Leon. I think I sent it in my last letter. I have not written any fantastics since except one — inspired by Tennyson's fancy -

"My heart would hear her and beat,
Had it lain for a century dead —
Would start and tremble under her feet —
And blossom in purple and red."

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It was this "Fantastic," published first in the *Item* on October 21, 1880, and later re-written in more ornate style and published in the *Times-Democrat* on April 6, 1884, under the title of "L'Amour après la Mort," which is the only one of the weird little sketches that has appeared in book form, outside of those which he himself republished in *Stray Leaves from Strange Literature*, and *Some Chinese Ghosts*.

For it was this one which he sent to a friend with the deprecatory criticism that it "belonged to the Period of Gush" and the request "to burn or tear it up after reading." He had merely enclosed it to show how and when he had first used the phrase "lentor inexpressible" to which his friend had objected.

"Fortunately his correspondent — as did most of those to whom he wrote — treasured everything in his handwriting," says his biographer, Mrs. Elizabeth Bisland Wetmore, "and the fragment which bore — my impression is — the title of 'A Dead Love' (the clipping lacks the caption) remains to give an example of some of the work that bears the flaws of his 'prentice hand, before he used his tools with the assured skill of a master." And she quotes the strange, fanciful little sketch in full, with the comment: "To his own, and perhaps other middle-aged taste, 'A Dead Love' may seem negligible, but to those still young enough, as he himself then was, to credit passion with a potency not

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only to survive 'the gradual furnace of the world,' but even to blossom in the dust of graves, this stigmatization as 'Gush' will seem as unfeeling as always does to the young the dry and sapless wisdom of granddams. To them any version of the Orphic myth is tinglingly credible. Yearningly desirous that the brief flower of life may never fade, such a cry finds an echo in the very roots of their inexperienced hearts. The smouldering ardor of its style, which a chastened judgment rejected, was perhaps less faulty than its author believed it to be in later years."

"It was to my juvenile admiration for this particular bit of work," she goes on, "that I owed the privilege of meeting Lafcadio Hearn in the winter of 1882, and of laying the foundation of a close friendship which lasted without a break until the day of his death."

His linking of love with death in this and the other "Fantastics" was in full accord with the sombre atmosphere of the trebly stricken city to which he had come — a city with a glorious and a joyous past, but just then ruined by three horrors: — recent war, misrule under the carpet-baggers, and oft-recurring pestilence. He had come expecting much from a semi-tropical environment. He found sorrow and trouble and a wasted land; and his mood was soon in unison with the disastrous elements around him. His letter to his friend Watkin when he first came to this smitten Paradise shows how strong

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the impression was: "When I saw it first — sunrise over Louisiana — the tears sprang to my eyes. It was like young death — a dead bride crowned with orange flowers — a dead face that asked for a kiss. I cannot say how fair and rich and beautiful this dead South is. It has fascinated me. I have resolved to live in it; I could not leave it for that chill and damp Northern life again."

From the files of the *Item* and the *Times-Democrat* over a score of these "Fantastics" have been gathered, and with them certain other fanciful little sketches that seem worth preserving, though they do not deal so directly with the mystic "twin-idea of Love and Death."

In his sympathetic Introduction to Hearn's *Leaves from the Diary of an Impressionist*, Mr. Ferris Greenslet deplores the loss of that collection of these "Fantastics" made by Hearn himself as one section of the book he evidently planned to publish under the title *Ephemeræ, or Leaves from the Diary of an Impressionist.* Says Mr. Greenslet:

> Apparently it was Hearn's intention to add to the "Floridian Reveries" a little collection of "Fantastics," with such savory titles as "Aïda," "The Devil's Carbuncle," "A Hemisphere in a Woman's Hair," "The Fool and Venus," etc.[1]

[1] Among the papers held by Dr. Gould is a memorandum of some of the "Fantastics," thus numbered:

1. Aïda.
2. Hiouen-Thsang.
3. El Vómito.

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This group, however, is, unfortunately, lost. From the notebook labeled upon its cover "Fantastics" many leaves have been cut, and there remains only the paper on "Arabian Women."

But for the solitary copy of the files of the *Item*, preserved in the office of that paper, most of these earliest bits of original fantasy wrought by the shabby, eccentric young journalist, whose passion for exquisite words was so incomprehensible to the other "newspaper boys," would have been wholly lost.

"The modest *Item* goes no farther than St. Louis," wrote Hearn to Krehbiel; and it was for this little two-page paper, too insignificant at that time to be preserved even in the city archives or in the public libraries, that he wrote most of the "tales of Love and Death" reproduced in this volume. Twenty-nine out of the thirty-odd are to be found only, so far as we know, in the brittle yellow pages of bound volumes of the *City Item*, from June, 1878, to December, 1881, to which we have been given access through the courtesy of the present owners

4. The Devil's Carbuncle.
5. A Hemisphere in a Woman's Hair.
6. The Clock.
7. The Fool and Venus.
8. The Stranger.

Two of these — "Aida" and "Hiouen-Thsang" — were published under those titles. Some of the others we think we have identified among the pieces entitled simply "Fantastics" at the time of their publication. "The Fool and Venus" may have been meant for what we have called "Aphrodite and the King's Prisoner." "The Clock" we have not found.

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of the *New Orleans Item*. The other six, some of which were rearrangements and paraphrases of earlier "Fantastics," appeared in the *Times-Democrat*, of which several nearly complete files exist in libraries.

Among these thirty-five brief but vitally imaginative sketches several are far superior to "L'Amour après la Mort."

The "Fantastics" proper and the "Other Fancies" have been grouped indiscriminately in chronological order, though differing greatly in spirit and in excellence of style. "The Little Red Kitten" and "At the Cemetery" are less labored in point of diction; but they are charming in their simplicity and unaffected tenderness. In the earlier of these little pictures his sympathy with our "poor brothers" — in this case "sisters" — of the animal world, from first to last a striking trait in his character, is beautifully expressed. There is delicate humor, too, as well as pathos, in the sketch. In the latter we have the glow of his feeling for the sorrow of a child, and the spring of his wonderful imagination which a few handfuls of sand not native to the spot evoke. In neither is there the least trace of the weird which is in so large a degree characteristic of most of the others. Slight as they are in texture, they seem to me to rise far above the more subtle and fanciful tales in the strength and beauty of simple truth to nature — to the best that was in his own nature.

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But the others, notably "The Black Cupid," "The Undying One," "Aphrodite and the King's Prisoner," "The Fountain of Gold," "The Gypsy's Story," are not to be undervalued. There is a power of vision, an imaginative magnificence, a weird melody of word-music in them that grips the mind of the reader as in a vise.

"The Fountain of Gold" was later reproduced in the form of "A Tropical Intermezzo," recently given to a wider public in the pages of *Leaves from the Diary of an Impressionist.* It is interesting to compare the first sketch with the finished picture. The earlier work is less dramatic, less convincing, less artistic, though full of a charm of its own. The whole design is transmuted into something immensely effective by the simple device of antiquating the language of him who tells the tale.

In a less degree the same thing may be remarked in the comparison of "A Dead Love," written for the *Item*, and "L'Amour après la Mort," contributed to the *Times-Democrat.*

In "The Tale of a Fan" may be traced, it seems to me, the germ of what he later expanded or meant to expand into "A Hemisphere in a Woman's Hair," which has not been found.

But it is not alone the charm that clings about all that is weird and fanciful that gives value to this early work of Hearn's. It sheds rich light upon one phase of his development and forms an essential part of his biography; and it helps to furnish proof,

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along with much else of varying form and excellence, that he put forth a vast deal of literary effort in the years of his stay in New Orleans before his engagement with the *Times-Democrat.*

The extent and value of his work as literary editor of the *Item* has been wholly ignored by his biographers and critics. This is due largely to the fact that the matter he selected for publication in his earlier literary career was drawn from the *Times-Democrat.* But to those who have gone carefully over the files of the *Item* it is evident that he did far more original work for that paper than for the other. His forte was supposed by the editors of the *Times-Democrat* to be translation, and, with the exception of some striking editorials, his work for that paper was mostly translation. Even the *Stray Leaves from Strange Literatures* and *Some Chinese Ghosts* belong to that category.

Besides the "Fantastics," he wrote for the *Item* many editorials on a variety of subjects and many book reviews, dramatic criticisms, and translations both from the French and the Spanish, as well as Creole sketches and certain fanciful squibs illustrated with quaint original designs distinctly akin to those that appear in *Letters from the Raven.*

But unquestionably his most remarkable contributions to the *Item* were the "Fantastics."

From a hint given him by a traveler's tale, by a trivial street incident, by a couplet of verse, or a carven cameo in an antique shop, by an old legend,

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or a few grains of sand, his genius was able to create a series of vivid and mystical visions, more real to him and to his readers than the political contests or the personal gossip which fill the surrounding columns of print.

To discover these vibrant bits of poesy in their commonplace setting is like finding rare and glorious orchids in the midst of the crowfoots and black-eyed Susans that crowd the banquettes and gutters' edges of our New Orleans streets.

"He hated the routine work, and was really quite lazy about it," testifies Colonel John W. Fairfax, former owner of the *Item*, and Hearn's first New Orleans employer and friend. At the age of seventy-two this genial old gentleman recalls many incidents of his association with the eccentric young literary editor who for three years and a half aided him and Mark F. Bigney in the task of filling the columns of the unpretentious little paper which he had purchased from the printers and tramp journalists who were its original owners — for the *Item* was started on a coöperative, profit-sharing basis.

"Hearn was really quite lazy about his regular work," Colonel Fairfax insists. "We had to prod him up all the time — stick pins in him, so to speak. But when he would write one of his own little fanciful things, out of his own head — dreams — he was always dreaming — why, then he would work like mad. And people always noticed those little things

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of his, somehow, for they were truly lovely, wonderful. 'Fantastics' he called them."

It was Colonel Fairfax who deserves the credit of "discovering" Hearn in New Orleans, when he applied, shabby and half-starved, at the *Item* office for a job, just after he had written to his friend Watkin, June 14, 1878: "Have been here seven months and never made one cent in the city. No possible prospect of doing anything in this town now or within twenty-five years."

But his next letter (undated) says — and it is evident that the impression he had made had secured him more than he had asked for:

"The day after I wrote you, I got a position (without asking for it) as assistant editor on the *Item*, at a salary considerably smaller than that I received on the *Commercial*, but large enough to enable me to save half of it."

And the old gentleman appears still to regard the Hearn he recalls with the sort of half-admiring, half-contemptuous, wholly marveling affection which a fine healthy turkey-cock would feel for the "ugly duckling" just beginning to reveal himself of the breed of swans.

Apparently he and Bigney allowed Hearn considerable latitude in his choice and treatment of subject. The three years of his work in their employ show bolder and more varied editorial comment, as well as five or six times as many "Fantastics" as are to be found in the six years of

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his work under the Bakers, and prove that the quality of his work was already fine enough to justify Page Baker's choice of him for a place on the staff of "the new literary venture."

How these strange little blossoms of Hearn's genius attracted the admiration of lovers of beauty and won him fame and friends among professional men and scholars is told most vividly in the words of Dr. Rodolph Matas, now a surgeon of international reputation, who was Hearn's friend and early foresaw his fame.

In those days [says he] I was not so busy as I am now, and had more time to read the books I enjoyed, and to spend long hours in talk with Hearn.

It was in the early eighties, I remember, that I knew him first. Whitney, of the *Times-Democrat*, was a friend of mine, and I asked him one day: "Who writes those wonderful things — translations, weird sketches, and remarkable editorials — in your paper?" And he told me, "A queer little chap, very shy — but I'll manage for you to meet him."

I became editor of the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1883, and it must have been shortly before this that I first met Hearn. He was astonished to find that I knew him so well — but then, you see, I had been reading these "Fantastics" and his wonderful book-reviews and translations, and his editorials on all sorts of unusual subjects, for a long time.

He often came to me to get information about medical points which he needed in some of his work. He was deeply interested in Arabian studies at that time, and I was able to give him some curious facts about the practice of medicine among the Arabs, which happened to be

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exactly what he was seeking. Not only did he read every book on Arabia which he could find, but he actually practiced the Arabic script, and he used to write me fantastic notes, addressing me as if I had been an Arab chief.

His capacity for reading swiftly — for getting the heart out of a book — was amazing. While others read sentences, he read paragraphs, chapters — in the time it would take an ordinary reader to finish a chapter, he would have read the whole book. And this in spite of his defective vision. With his one great near-sighted eye roving over the page, he seemed to absorb the meaning of the author — to reach his thought and divine his message with incredible rapidity. He knew books so well — knew the habits of thought of their writers, the mechanics of literature. His power of analysis was intuitive. Swiftly as he read, it would be found on questioning him afterward that nothing worth while had been overlooked, and he could refer back and find any passage unerringly.

Both in taste and temperament he was morbid, and in many respects abnormal — in the great development of his genius in certain directions, and also in his limitations and deficiencies in other lines. His nature towered like a cloud-topping mountain on one side, while on others it was not only undeveloped — it was a cavity! I understood this better, perhaps, than others of his friends, knowing as I did the pathology of such natures, and for that reason our intercourse was singularly free and candid, for Hearn revealed himself to me with a frankness and unconventionality which would have startled another. I never judged him by conventional standards. I listened to the brilliant, erratic, intemperate outpourings of his mind, aware of his eccentricities without allowing them to blind me to the beauty and value of his really marvelous nature. For example, he would bitterly denounce his enemies — or fancied enemies — for he had

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an obsession of persecution — in language that was frightful to listen to — inventing unheard-of tortures for those whom he deemed plotters against him. Yet in reality he was as gentle and as tender-hearted as a woman — and as passionately affectionate. But there was an almost feminine jealousy in his nature, too, and a sensitiveness that was exaggerated to a degree that caused him untold suffering. He was singularly and unaffectedly modest about his work — curiously anxious to know the real opinion of those whose judgment he valued, on any work which he had done, while impatient of flattery or "lionizing." Yet with all his modesty he had, even in those days of his first successes, a high and proud respect for his work. He was too good a critic not to know his value; and he consistently refused to cheapen it by allowing it to appear in any second-rate medium — I mean, any of his literary work, as distinct from the journalistic matter he did for his daily bread. Nor would he lower himself by criticizing any book or poem which he did not consider worthy of his opinion. Thus he was obliged, in spite of his kind nature, which impelled him to do anything which a friend might ask, to refuse to criticize books of inferior worth, and he was very firm and dignified about such refusals. He would not debase his pen by using it on inferior subjects.

At the time when I knew him best, he was already highly esteemed by many who appreciated his great gifts, while others regarded him with some jealousy and would gladly have seen him put down. From the first I recognized his genius so clearly that he used to laugh at me for my faith in his future fame. For I would often predict that he would be known to future generations as one of the great writers of the century, though it was easy to foresee that he would not receive full recognition in his lifetime.

And though he used to smile at my enthusiasm, he

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himself felt, I am convinced, the same certainty as to the quality of his gift, the ultimate fame that Fate held for him. It was this that made him regard his work with a reverent humility, and it was this that accounted in some degree for his extraordinary shyness, which made him shrink from being lionized or exploited by those who, at that time, would have been glad enough to entertain him and make much of him, for he had already begun to be quite an important literary person in the circles here which cared for such matters.

But Hearn fled from social attentions as from the plague. He was by nature suspicious and he loathed flattery and pretense.

His sense of literary and artistic values was singularly sure, and it has always seemed to me that it was intuitive — a sort of instinctive feeling for beauty and truth.

When he became acquainted with the work of Herbert Spencer — through the enthusiasm of his friend Ernest Crosby for that philosopher and for the Darwinian theory of evolution, which we were all discussing with deep interest at that time — he used that thinker's philosophy as a foundation upon which to base his marvelous speculations as to the ultimate development of the race and the infinite truths of the universe. I used to listen in wonder while he talked by the hour along these lines, weaving the most beautiful and imaginative visions of what might be. For his theory of the universe was essentially literary rather than philosophical.

It was to Dr. Matas that "Chita" was dedicated, not only as a token of the warm admiration and affection which the sensitive soul of Hearn felt for the broad-minded young physician, but as an acknowledgment of the help Dr. Matas had given him in gathering the material for the setting of

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the story. The physician's cosmopolitan rearing and his scattered practice among French, Spanish, and even Filipino settlers in the region about Grand' Isle enabled him to give Hearn in each instance the appropriate phraseology in the dialect of the people he was writing about.

Some of the "Other Fancies" are noteworthy for special reasons. In "A River Reverie" one gets an odd glimpse of Mark Twain reflected in the personality of the dream-haunted Irish-Greek, who handles the visit of the humorist in so unjournalistic a way. How ruthlessly his recollections of the old river-captain would be excised by the copy-reader of the modern newspaper!

In several of these sketches Hearn gives a picture of the horrors of yellow fever which shows even more clearly than his letters how vivid was the impression made on him by that summer of 1878, when he passed through the epidemic with only an attack of the dengue, a mild form of the tropical plague.

Others of these sketches show the influence of contact with Spanish friends and acquaintances, and the strong longing for the tropics, which seems to have lasted all his life.

"Aïda" is, of course, merely the story of the well-known opera by Verdi. Hearn wrote for the *Item*, during the opera season of 1880, brief outlines like this of the stories of several of the operas played at the French Opera House that winter: this one is included in this volume only because it is mentioned

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among the "Fantastics" in the list given in Dr. George Gould's book, *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn.* "Hiouen-Thsang" is included for the same reason, as it is not strictly a "Fantastic."

"The Devil's Carbuncle," besides being a translation, is not a "Fantastic," according to Hearn's definition of the term: it is not a story of love and death; it is a story of greed and death.

"The Post-Office" is much more breezy and out-of-doors than any of the "Fantastics," and does not properly belong with them; but it is so charming a sketch of his visit to Grand' Isle, the place which gave him the material for his first successful original story, "Chita," that it seems worth while to reproduce it.

It has been almost a commonplace, with writers treating of Hearn's development, to date from this visit the beginnings of his interest in far-away lands. But they mistake in assigning a late date for his delight in the tropics and his longing for Japan. His articles in the *Item* years before go to show that from the first it was almost an instinct with him to yearn for glimpses of the Orient and the Spanish Main. Throughout the volume of the *Item* for 1879 the column headed "Odds and Ends" reveals his interest in Spanish-American countries. It is generally shown in translated citations or quotations from *La Raza Latina.*

In finding these cameo-like studies buried in the pages of the newspapers of a generation ago, and

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in identifying them beyond question as Hearn's, I have been aided by Mr. John S. Kendall and by my daughter, Ethel Hutson, who have been for some years gathering traces of Hearn's journalistic activities in New Orleans. To Mr. C. G. Stith, of the *New Orleans Item*, we are indebted for the finding of the first two or three of the "Fantastics" in that paper, after we had located Hearn's work in the *Times-Democrat*.

To one who has studied his way of expressing himself in his imaginative writings the internal evidence would be quite enough to prove that these "Fantastics" were woven in the brain-cells of Lafcadio Hearn. But in addition to this we have the avowal of the editor-in-chief of the *Item*, elicited by the praise of the *Claiborne Guardian*.[1]

[1] In the issue of Sunday evening, September 19, 1880, appears this excerpt, with the editor's comment:

FANTASTICS

Claiborne Guardian

We do not remember to have ever read a series of more brilliant articles than those which occasionally appear under the above heading in that bright little paper THE CITY ITEM. The writer, with a perfect command of the language, unites a vivid imagination. His fancy is as exuberant as the growth of tropical flowers, and is as pleasing as glowing and fascinating. We always turn to the editorial page for 'Fantastics' when we receive the ITEM. Would it be out of place to inquire who this rare genius is? It can't be that grave and dignified gentleman, M. F. Bigney. We have read many excellent sketches from his pen, but never anything like these pieces. Who is the writer that adds another to the many attractions of our prosperous and worthy exchange?

"We gladly comply," replies the ITEM editorially, "with the request of our appreciative Claiborne contemporary. The writer of 'Fantastics' is Mr. Lafcadio Hearne [*sic*], who has been our assistant co-laborer for nearly three years.— ED. ITEM."

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FANTASTICS AND OTHER FANCIES

The author named them only "Fantastics." We have given to each its separate title, as indicated by the most striking feature in the story. To the "Other Fancies," which we have included in the collection, he gave the titles under which they now appear, and some of them he signed.

CHARLES WOODWARD HUTSON

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FANTASTICS AND OTHER FANCIES

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FANTASTICS AND OTHER FANCIES

* * *

ALL IN WHITE [1]

"No," he said, "I did not stay long in Havana. I should think it would be a terrible place to live in. Somehow, in spite of all the tropical brightness, the city gave me the idea of a huge sepulchre at times. One feels in those narrow streets as though entombed. Pretty women? — I suppose so, yes; but I saw only one. It was in one of the quaint streets which make you think that the Spaniards learned to build their cities from the Moors — a chasm between lofty buildings, and balconies jutting out above to break the view of the narrow strip of blue sky. Nobody was in the street except myself; and the murmur of the city's life seemed to come from afar, like a ghostly whisper. The silence was so strange that I felt as if walking on the pavement of a church, and disturbing the religious quiet with my footsteps. I stopped before a great window — no glass, but iron bars only; — and behind the iron bars lay the only beautiful woman I saw in Havana by daylight. She could not have been more than

[1] *Item*, September 14, 1879.

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eighteen — a real Spanish beauty — dark, bewitching, an oval face with noble features, and long eyelashes resting on the cheek. She was dead! All in white — like the phantom bride of the German tradition — white robes, white satin shoes, and one white tropical flower in her black hair, shining like a star. I do not know what it was; but its perfume came to me through the window, sweet and strange. The young woman, sleeping there all in white, against the darkness of the silent chamber within, fascinated me. I felt as if it was not right to look at her so long; yet I could not help it. Candles were burning at her head and feet; and in the stillness of the hot air their yellow flames did not even tremble. Suddenly I heard a heavy tramping at the end of the street. A battalion of Spanish soldiers were coming towards me. There was no means of proceeding; and I had no time to retreat. The street was so narrow that I was obliged to put my back to the wall in order to let them pass. They passed in dead silence — I only heard the tread of the men, mechanically regular and heavily echoing. They were all in white. Every man looked at me as he passed by; and every look was dark, sinister, suspicious. I was anxious to escape those thousands of Spanish eyes; but I could not have done it without turning my face to the wall. I do not think one of them looked at the dead girl at all; but each one looked at me, and forced me to look at him. I dared not smile,— not one of the swarthy faces

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smiled. The situation became really unpleasant. It was like one of those nightmares in which you are obliged to witness an endless procession of phantoms, each one of whom compels you to look at it. If I had even heard a single "Carajo Americano," I should have felt relieved; but all passed me in dead silence. I was transpierced by the black steel of at least two thousand Spanish eyes, and every eye looked at me as if I had been detected in some awful crime. Yet why they did not look at that window instead of looking at me, I cannot tell. After they had passed, I looked an instant at the dead girl again; and it seemed to me that I saw the ghost of a smile — a cynical, mocking smile about her lips. She was well avenged — if her consecrated rest had been disturbed by my heretic eyes. I can still smell the white flower; and I can see even the silk stitches in the white satin shoes — the motionless yellow tongues of the candles — the thin dead face that seemed to smile, and the thousand sinister faces that smiled not, and dared me to smile."

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THE LITTLE RED KITTEN [1]

THE kitten would have looked like a small red lion, but that its ears were positively enormous — making the head like one of those little demons sculptured in mediæval stonework which have wings instead of ears. It ate beefsteak and cockroaches, caterpillars and fish, chicken and butterflies, mosquito-hawks and roast mutton, hash and tumble-bugs, beetles and pigs' feet, crabs and spiders, moths and poached eggs, oysters and ea thworms, ham and mice, rats and rice pudding — until its belly became a realization of Noah's Ark. On this diet it soon acquired strength to whip all the ancient cats in the neighborhood, and also to take under its protection a pretty little salmon-colored cat of the same sex, which was too weak to defend itself and had been unmercifully mauled every night before the tawny sister enforced reform in the shady yard of the old Creole house. The red kitten was not very big, but was very solid and more agile than a monkey. Its flaming emerald eyes were always watching, and its enormous ears always on the alert; and woe to the cat who dared approach the weak little sister with hostile intentions. The two always slept together — the little speckled one

[1] *Item*, September 24, 1879. Hearn's own title.

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resting its head upon the body of its protector; and the red kitten licked its companion every day like a mother washing her baby. Wherever the red kitten went the speckled kitten followed; they hunted all kinds of creeping things together, and even formed a criminal partnership in kitten stealing. One day they were forcibly separated; the red kitten being locked up in the closet under the stairs to keep it out of mischief during dinner hours, as it had evinced an insolent determination to steal a stuffed crab from the plate of Madame R. Thus temporarily deprived of its guide, philosopher, and friend, the speckled kitten unfortunately wandered under a rocking-chair violently agitated by a heavy gentleman who was reading the "Bee"; and with a sharp little cry of agony it gave up its gentle ghost. Everybody stopped eating; and there was a general outburst of indignation and sorrow. The heavy gentleman got very red in the face, and said he had not intended to do it. "Tonnerre d'une pipe; — nom d'un petit bonhomme!" — he might have been a little more careful!... An hour later the red kitten was vainly seeking its speckled companion — all ears and eyes. It uttered strange little cries, and vainly waited for the customary reply. Then it commenced to look everywhere — upstairs, downstairs, on the galleries, in the corners, among the shrubbery, never supposing in its innocent mind that a little speckled body was lying far away upon a heap of garbage and ashes. Then it became very

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silent; purring when offered food, but eating nothing.... At last a sudden thought seemed to strike it. It had never seen the great world which rumbled beyond the archway of the old courtyard; perhaps its little sister had wandered out there. So it would go and seek her. For the first time it wandered beyond the archway and saw the big world it had never seen before — miles of houses and myriads of people and great cotton-floats thundering by, and great wicked dogs which murder kittens. But the little red one crept along beside the houses in the narrow strip of shadow, sometimes trembling when the big wagons rolled past, and sometimes hiding in doorways when it saw a dog, but still bravely seeking the lost sister.... It came to a great wide street — five times wider than the narrow street before the old Creole house; and the sun was so hot, so hot. The little creature was so tired and hungry, too. Perhaps somebody would help it to find the way. But nobody seemed to notice the red kitten, with its funny ears and great bright eyes. It opened its little pink mouth and cried; but nobody stopped. It could not understand that. Whenever it had cried that way at home, somebody had come to pet it. Suddenly a fire-engine came roaring up the street, and a great crowd of people were running after it. Then the kitten got very, very frightened; and tried to run out of the way, but its poor little brain was so confused and there was so much noise and shouting....

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Next morning two little bodies lay side by side on the ashes — miles away from the old Creole house. The little tawny kitten had found its speckled sister.

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THE NIGHT OF ALL SAINTS [1]

THE Night of All Saints — a night clear and deep and filled with a glory of white moonlight.

And a low sweet Wind came up from the West, and wandered among the tombs, whispering to the Shadows.

And there were flowers among the tombs.

They looked into the face of the moon, and from them a thousand invisible perfumes arose into the night.

And the Wind blew upon the flowers until their soft eyelids began to close and their perfume grew fainter in the moonlight. And the Wind sought in vain to arouse them from the dreamless sleep into which they were sinking.

For the perfume of a flower is but the presence of its invisible soul; and the flowers drooped in the moonlight, and at the twelfth hour they closed their eyes forever and the incense of their lives passed away from them.

Then the Wind mourned awhile among the old white tombs; and whispered to the cypress trees and to the Shadows, "Were not these offerings?"

And the Shadows and the cypresses bowed weirdly in mysterious reply. But the Wind asked, "To

[1] *Item*, November 1, 1879. Hearn's own title.

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Whom?" And the Shadows kept silence with the cypresses.

Then the Wind entered like a ghost into the crannies of the white sepulchres, and whispered in the darkness, and coming forth shuddered and mourned.

And the Shadows shuddered also; and the cypresses sighed in the night.

"It is a mystery," sobbed the Wind, "and passeth my understanding. Wherefore these offerings to those who dwell in the darkness where even dreams are dead?"

But the trees and the Shadows answered not and the hollow tombs uttered no voice.

Then came a Wind out of the South, murmuring to the orange groves, and lifting the long tresses of the palms with the breath of his wings, and bearing back to the ancient place of tombs the souls of a thousand flowers. And the Wind of the South whispered to the souls of the flowers, "Answer, little spirits, answer my mourning brother."

And the flower-souls answered, making fragrant all the white streets of the white city of the dead:

"We are the offerings of love bereaved to the All-loving — the sacrifices of the fatherless to the All-father. We know not of the dead — the Infinite secret hath not been revealed to us; we know only that they sleep under the eye of Him who never sleeps. Thou hast seen the flowers die; but their perfumes live in the wings of the winds and sweeten

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all God's world. Is it not so with that fragrance of good deeds, which liveth after the deed hath been done — or the memories of dead loves which soften the hearts of the living?"

And the cypresses together with the Shadows bowed answeringly; and the West Wind, ceasing to mourn, spread his gauzy wings in flight toward the rising of the sun.

The moon, sinking, made longer the long shadows; the South Wind caressed the cypresses, and, bearing with him ghosts of the flowers, rose in flight toward the dying fires of the stars.

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THE DEVIL'S CARBUNCLE [1]

RICARDO PALMA, the Lima correspondent of *La Raza Latina*, has been collecting some curious South American traditions which date back to the Spanish Conquest. The following legend, entitled "El Carbunclo del Diablo," is one of these:

WHEN Juan de la Torre, one of the celebrated Conquistadores, discovered and seized an immense treasure in one of the huacas near the city of Lima, the Spanish soldiers became seized with a veritable mania for treasure-seeking among the old forts and cemeteries of the Indians. Now there were three ballesteros belonging to the company of Captain Diego Gumiel, who had formed a partnership for the purpose of seeking fortunes among the huacas of Miraflores, and who had already spent weeks upon weeks in digging for treasure without finding the smallest article of value.

On Good Friday, in the year 1547, without any respect for the sanctity of the day — for to human covetousness nothing is sacred — the three ballesteros, after vainly sweating and panting all morning and afternoon, had not found anything except a mummy — not even a trinket or bit of pottery worth three pesetas. Thereupon they gave themselves over to the Father of Evil — cursing all the

[1] *Item*, November 2, 1879. Hearn's own title.

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Powers of Heaven, and blaspheming so horribly that the Devil himself was obliged to stop his ears with cotton.

By this time the sun had set; and the adventurers were preparing to return to Lima, cursing the niggardly Indians for the unpardonable stupidity of not having been entombed in state upon beds of solid gold or silver, when one of the Spaniards gave the mummy so ferocious a kick that it rolled a considerable distance. A glimmering jewel dropped from the skeleton, and rolled slowly after the mummy.

"Canario!" cried one of the soldiers, "what kind of a taper is that? Santa Maria! what a glorious carbuncle!"

And he was about to walk toward the jewel, when the one who had kicked the corpse, and who was a great bully, held him back with the words:

"Halt, comrade! May I never be sad if that carbuncle does not belong to me; for it was I who found the mummy!"

"May the Devil carry thee away! I first saw it shine, and may I die before any other shall possess it!"

"Cepos quedos!" thundered the third, unsheathing his sword, and making it whistle round his head. "So I am nobody?"

"Caracolines! Not even the Devil's wife shall wring it from me," cried the bully, unsheathing his dagger.

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And a tremendous fight began among the three comrades.

The following day some Mitayos found the dead body of one of the combatants, and the other two riddled with wounds, begging for a confessor. Before they died they related the story of the carbuncle, and told how it illumined the combat with a sinister and lurid light. But the carbuncle was never found after. Tradition ascribes its origin to the Devil; and it is said that each Good Friday night travelers may perceive its baleful rays twinkling from the huaca Juliana, rendered famous by this legend.

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LES COULISSES [1]

SOUVENIRS OF A STRAKOSCH OPERA NIGHT

SURELY it cannot have been a poet who first inspired the popular mind with that widely spread and deeply erroneous belief that "behind the scenes" all is hollow mockery and emptiness and unsightliness; — that the comeliness of the pliant limbs which move to music before the starry row of shielded lights is due to a judicious distribution of sawdust; and that our visions of fair faces are created by the magic contained in pots of ointment and boxes of pearl powder of which the hiding-places are known only to those duly initiated into the awful mysteries of the Green Room.

No; the Curtain is assuredly the Veil which hides from unromantic eyes the mysteries of a veritable Fairy-World — not a fairyland so clearly and sharply outlined as the artistic fantasies of Christmas picture-books, but a fairyland of misty landscapes and dim shadows and bright shapes moving through the vagueness of mystery. There is really a world of stronger enchantment behind than before the scenes; all that movement of white limbs and fair faces — that shifting of shadowy fields and plains, those changing visions of mountain and wold,

[1] *Item*, December 6, 1879. Hearn's own title.

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The Old Creole Opera House, New Orleans

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of towers that disappear as in tales of knight-errantry, and cottages transformed into palaces as in the "Arabian Nights" — is but a small part of the great wizard-work nightly wrought by invisible hands behind the Curtain. And when, through devious corridors and dimly-lighted ways — between rows of chambers through whose doors one catches sudden glimpses of the elves attiring in purple and silver, in scarlet and gold, for the gaslit holiday among canvas woods and flowing brooks of muslin, mystic, wonderful — thou shalt arrive within the jagged borders of the Unknown World itself to behold the Circles of bright seats curving afar off in atmospheres of artificial light, and the Inhabitants of those Circles become themselves involuntary Actors for the amusement of the lesser audience, then verily doth the charm begin. There is no disillusion as yet. The Isis of the drama has lifted her outer veil; but a veil yet more impenetrable remains to conceal the mystery of her face. The Heart of all that Mimic Life — mimic yet warm and real — throbs about thee, but dost thou understand its pulsations? Thou art in the midst of a secret, in the innermost chamber of the witch-workers — yet the witchcraft remains. Thou hast approached too near the Fata Morgana of theatrical enchantment — all has vanished or tumbled into spectral ruin. Fragments of castles and antiquated cities — torn and uneven remnants of pictures of various centuries huddled together in

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mystic anachronism — surround and overshadow thee; but to comprehend that harmonious whole, thou must retire to the outer circles of the shining temple, before the tall Veil. About thee it is a world wrought of many broken worlds; — a world of picturesque ruin like the moon in heaven — a world of broken lights and shadows and haunted glooms — a wild dream — a work of goblinry. Content thyself, seek not disillusion; for to the gods of this mysterious sphere human curiosity is the greatest of abominations. Satisfy thyself with the knowledge that thou art in Fairyland; and that it is not given to mortals to learn all the ways of elves. What though the woods be mockeries, and the castles be thinner than Castles of Spain, and the white statues fair Emptinesses like the elf women of Northern dreams? — the elves and gnomes and fairies themselves are real and palpable and palpitant with the ruddy warmth of life.

Perhaps thou thinkest of those antique theatres — marble cups set between the breasts of sweetly-curving hills, with the cloud-frescoed dome of the Infinite for a ceiling, and for scenery nature's richest charms of purple mountain and azure sea and emerald groves of olive. But that beautiful materialism of the ancient theatre charmed not as the mystery of ours — a mystery too delicate to suffer the eye of Day; — a mystery wrought by fairies who dare only toil by night. One sunbeam would destroy the charm of this dusky twilight

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world. Strange! how the mind wanders in this strange place! Yet it is easier to dream of two thousand years ago than to recollect that thou livest in the material present — that only a painted ceiling lies between thy vision and the amethystine heaven of stars above, and that only a wall of plastered brick separates thee from the streets of New Orleans or the gardens westward where the bananas are nodding their heads under the moon. For the genii of this inner world are weaving their spells about thee. Figures of other centuries pass before thy eyes, as in the steel mirror of a wizard: lords of Italian cities gorgeous as Emperor-moths, captains of free companies booted and spurred, phantoms, one may fancy, of fair women whose portraits hang in the Uffizi Gallery, and prelates of the sixteenth century. Did Macbeth's witches ever perform greater magic than this? — a series of tableaux after Racinet animated by some elfish art? If the human character of the witchery does not betray itself by a pretty anachronism! — some intermingling of the costumes of the sixteenth century with those of the seventeenth, a sacrifice of history to the beauty of woman — the illusion remains unbroken. Thou art living, by magic, in the age of Lorenzo di Medici; and is it strange that they should address thee in the Italian tongue?

There is an earthquake of applauding, the Circles of seats are again hidden, and this world of canvas and paint is tumbling about thy ears. The spell is

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broken for a moment by Beings garbed in the every-day attire of the nineteenth century, who have devoted themselves to the work of destruction and reconstruction — to whom dreamers are an abomination and idlers behind the scenes a vexation of spirit. Va t'en, inseq' de bois de lit!

Aye, thou mayst well start! — thou hast seen her before. Where? — when? In a little French store, not very, very far from the old Creole Opera House. This enchantment of the place has transformed her into a fairy. Ah, thou marvelest that she can be so pretty; nor Shakespeare's Viola nor Gautier's Graciosa were fairer to look upon than this dream of white grace and pliant comeliness in the garb of dead centuries. And yet another and another Creole girl — familiar faces to the dwellers in the Quaint Places of New Orleans. What is the secret of that strange enchantment which teaches us that the modest everyday robe of black merino may be but the chrysalis-shell within which God's own butterflies are hidden?

Suddenly through the motley rout of princes and princesses, of captains and conspirators, of soldiers and priests, of courtiers and dukes, there comes a vision of white fairies; these be the Damosels of the Pirouette. Thou mayest watch them unobserved; for the other beings heed them not; Cophetua-like, the King in his coronation robes is waltzing with a pretty Peasant Girl; and like Christina of Spain, the Queen is tête-à-tête with a soldier. The dancers give

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the impression of something aerial, ethereal, volatile — something which rests and flies but walks not — some species of splendid fly with wings half-open. The vulgar Idea of Sawdust vanishes before the reality of those slender and pliant limbs. They are preparing for the dance with a series of little exercises which provoke a number of charming images and call out all the supple graces of the figure; it is Atalanta preparing to pursue Hippomenes; it is a butterfly shaking its wings; it is a white bird pluming itself with noiseless skill. But when the Terpsichorean flight is over, and the theatre shakes with applause; while the dancers shrink panting and exhausted into some shadowy hiding-place, breathing more hurriedly than a wrestler after a long bout — thou wilt feel grateful to the humane spirits who break the applause with kindly hisses, and rebuke the ignorance which seeks only its own pleasure in cries of encore.

And the Asmodean Prompter who moves the dramatic strings that agitate all these Puppets of mimic passion, whose sonorous tones penetrate all the recesses of the mysterious scenery without being heard before the footlights, resumes his faithful task; the story of harmony and tragedy is continued by the orchestra and the singers, while a Babel of many tongues is heard among the wooden rocks and the canvas trees and the silent rivers of muslin. But little canst thou reck of the mimic opera. That is for those who sit in the outer circles.

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The music of the many-toned Opera of Life envelops and absorbs the soul of the stranger — teaching him that the acting behind the Curtain is not all a mimicry of the Real, but in truth a melodrama of visible, tangible, sentient life, which must endure through many thousand scenes until that Shadow, who is stronger than Love, shall put out the lights, and ring down the vast and sable Curtain. And thus dreaming, thou findest thyself again in the streets, whitened by the moon! Lights, fairies, kings, and captains are gone. Ah! thou hast not been dreaming, friend; but the hearts of those who have beheld Fairyland are heavy.

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THE STRANGER [1]

THE Italian had kept us all spellbound for hours, while a great yellow moon was climbing higher and higher above the leaves of the bananas that nodded weirdly at the windows. Within the great hall a circle of attentive listeners — composed of that motley mixture of the wanderers of all nations, such as can be found only in New Orleans, and perhaps Marseilles — sat in silence about the lamplit table, riveted by the speaker's dark eyes and rich voice. There was a natural music in those tones; the stranger chanted as he spoke like a wizard weaving a spell. And speaking to each one in the tongue of his own land, he told them of the Orient. For he had been a wanderer in many lands; and afar off, touching the farther horn of the moonlight crescent, lay awaiting him a long, graceful vessel with a Greek name, which would unfurl her white wings for flight with the first ruddiness of morning.

"I see that you are a smoker," observed the stranger to his host as he rose to go. "May I have the pleasure of presenting you with a Turkish pipe? I brought it from Constantinople."

It was moulded of blood-red clay after a fashion of Moresque art, and fretted about its edges with gilded work like the ornamentation girdling the

[1] *Item*, April 17, 1880.

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minarets of a mosque. And a faint perfume, as of the gardens of Damascus, clung to its gaudy bowl, whereon were deeply stamped mysterious words in the Arabian tongue.

The voice had long ceased to utter its musical syllables. The guests had departed; the lamps were extinguished within. A single ray of moonlight breaking through the shrubbery without fell upon a bouquet of flowers, breathing out their perfumed souls into the night. Only the host remained — dreaming of moons larger than ours, and fiercer summers; minarets white and keen, piercing a cloudless sky, and the many-fountained pleasure-places of the East. And the pipe exhaled its strange and mystical perfume, like the scented breath of a summer's night in the rose-gardens of a Sultan. Above, in deeps of amethyst, glimmered the everlasting lamps of heaven; and from afar, the voice of a muezzin seemed to cry, in tones liquidly sweet as the voice of the stranger — "All ye who are about to sleep, commend your souls to Him who never sleeps."

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Y PORQUE? [1]

"Ah, caballero," said the Spanish lady, with a pretty play of fan and eye as she spoke, "you will not return to Mexico, the beautiful city?"

"No, señorita," replied the young man addressed, a handsome boy, about twenty-two years old, olive-skinned and graceful, with black curly hair, that had those bluish lights one sees in the plumage of a raven.

"Y porque?" asked the girl, laying aside her fan for a moment, and concentrating all the deep fire of her eyes upon his face.

The boy did not answer. He made an effort to speak, and turned his head aside. There was a momentary lull in the conversation. Suddenly he burst into tears, and left the room.

The beautiful city! Ah! how well he remembered it! The mighty hills sleeping in their eternal winding-sheets of snow, the azure heaven and the bright lake rippled by mountain winds, the plaza and its familiar sights and sounds. Y porque? The question brought up all the old bright memories, and the present for the moment melted away, and the dream of a Mexican night rose in ghostliness before him.

[1] *Item*, April 17, 1880.

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He stood again within an ancient street, quaint with the quaintness of another century, and saw the great windows of the hospitable Spanish residence at which he had been so often received as a son. Again he heard the long chant of the sereno in the melancholy silence; again he saw the white stars glimmering like lamps above the towers of the cathedral. The windows were tall and large, and barred with bars of iron; and there were lights in one of them — flickering taper-lights that made moving shadows on the wall. And within the circle of the tapers, a young girl lay all in white with hands crossed upon her breast, and flowers in the dark hair. He remembered all with that terrible minuteness agony lends to observation — even how the flickering of the tapers played with the shadows of the silky eyelashes, making the lids seem to quiver, as though that heart, to which all his hopes and aims and love had been trusted, had not forever ceased to beat. Again the watchman solemnly chanted the hour of the night, with words of Spanish piety; and far in the distance that weird mountain which ancient Mexican fancy called "The White Lady," and modern popular imagination, "The Dead One," lay as a corpse with white arms crossed upon its bosom, in awful mockery of the eternal sleep.

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A DREAM OF KITES [1]

LOOKING out into the clear blue of the night from one of those jutting balconies which constitute a summer luxury in the Creole city, the eye sometimes marks the thin black threads which the telegraph wires draw sharply against the sky. We observed last evening the infinitely extending lines of the vast web which the Electric Spider has spun about the world; and the innumerable wrecks of kites fluttering thereupon, like the bodies of gaudy flies — strange lines of tattered objects extending far into the horizon and tracking out the course of the electric messengers beyond the point at which the slender threads cease to remain visible.

How fantastic the forms of these poor tattered wrecks, when the uniform tint of night robs them of their color, and only defines their silhouettes against the sky! — some swinging to and fro wearily, like thin bodies of malefactors mummified by sunheat upon their gibbets — some wildly fluttering as in the agony of despair and death — some dancing grotesquely upon their perches like flying goblins — some like impaled birds, with death-stiffened wings, motionlessly attached to their wire snare, and glaring with painted eyes upon the scene

[1] *Item*, June 18, 1880.

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below as in a stupor of astonishment at their untimely fate.

All these represented the destruction of childish ambitions — each the wreck of some boyish pleasure. Many were doubtless wept for, and dreamed of afterward regretfully on wet pillows. And stretching away into the paler blue of the horizon we looked upon the interminable hues of irregular dots they made against it and remembered that each little dot represented some little pang.

Then it was natural that we should meditate a little upon the vanity of the ways in which these childish losses had been borne. The little owners of the poor kites had hearts whose fibre differed more than that of the kites themselves. Some might weep, but some doubtless laughed with childish heroism, and soon forgot their loss; some doubtless thought the world was all askew, and that telegraph wires ought never to have been invented; some, considering critically the question of cause and effect, resolved as young philosophers to profit by their experience, and seek similar pleasures thereafter where telegraph wires ensnared not; while some, perhaps, profited not at all, but only made new kites and abandoned them to the roguish wind, which again traitorously delivered them up to the insatiable enemies of kites and birds.

Is it not said that the child is the father of the man?

And as we sat there in the silence with the stars

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burning in the purple deeps of the summer night above us, we dreamed of the kites which children of a larger growth fly in the face of heaven — toys of love and faith — toys of ambition and of folly — toys of grotesque resolve and flattering ideals — toys of vain dreams and vain expectation — the kites of human Hope, gaudy-colored or gray, richly tinseled or humbly simple — rising and soaring and tossing on the fickle winds of the world, only to become entangled at last in that mighty web of indissoluble and everlasting threads which the Weird Sisters spin for all of us.

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HEREDITARY MEMORIES [1]

"I was observing," continued the Doctor, "that it very frequently happens that upon seeing or hearing something new for the first time — that is, something entirely new to us — we feel a surprise, not caused by the novelty of that which we see or hear, but by a very curious echo in the mind. I say echo. I would do better to use the word memory-echo. It seems to us, although we know positively we have never seen or heard of this new thing in our mortal lives, that we heard or saw it in some infinitely remote period. An old Latin writer considered this phenomenon to be a proof of the theory of Preëxistence. A Buddhist would tell you that the soul, through all its wanderings of a million years, retains faint memories of all it has seen or heard in each transmigration and that each of us now living in the flesh possesses dim and ghostly recollections of things heard and seen æons before our birth. That the phenomenon exists there can be no doubt. I am not a believer in Buddhism nor in the soul; but I attribute the existence of these vague memories to hereditary brain impressions."

"How do you mean, Doctor?" asked one of the boarders.

[1] *Item*, July 22, 1880.

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"Why, sir, I mean that a memory may be inherited just like a mole, a birthmark, a physical or a moral characteristic. Our brains, as a clever writer has expressed it, are like the rocks of the Sinaitic valley, all covered over with inscriptions written there by the long caravans of Thought. Each impression received upon the brain through the medium of the senses leaves there a hieroglyphic inscription, which, although invisible under the microscope, is nevertheless material and real. Why should not these hieroglyphs of the parent brain reappear in the brain of the child? — fainter and less decipherable to the eyes of the memory, yet not so faint as to be wholly lost."

There was a long silence. The moon rose higher; the bananas did not wave their leaves; the air still glowed with the heat of the dead day; and the stars in the blue above sparkled with that luminosity only known to Southern nights. Everything seemed to dream except the lights of heaven, and we dreamed also of the Infinite.

"Doctor," said a bearded stranger, who had remained silent all the evening, "I want to ask you a question. I have lived in the West Indies, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico; and I am something of a traveler. I have a good memory, too. I seldom forget the sight of a city I have visited. I remember every street and nook I have ever seen. How is it, then, that I dream continually of places which I am positive I have never seen, and hear in my sleep a

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tongue spoken that I have never heard while awake in any part of the world?"

The Doctor smiled. "Can you describe," he asked, "the places you see in your dreams?"

"I can, because I have dreamed of them more than a hundred times. Sometimes I do not dream of them for a year at a time; and then again I will dream of them every night for a week. And I always hear that strange tongue spoken.

"I sail to these places from a vast port, surrounded by huge wharves of cut stone — white and even-worn by the friction of a mighty traffic. It is all sun there and light and air. There are tropical fruits heaped up, and wines and oils and spices; and many people in brightly colored dresses, blue and yellow. I have a queer idea that it might be some port in the Mediterranean.

"Then I arrive after a long voyage in a strange country. I do not remember the disembarking. I only remember a great city. It is not built like any American or European city. Its houses are high; its streets narrow and fantastic. I have seen in Spain a few buildings which reminded me of those I dream about; but they were old Moorish buildings.

"There is an immense edifice in one part of the city, with two graceful domes, rising like white breasts against a sky most intensely blue. There are tall and very slender white towers near the domes. There are enormous stairways of white stone leading down into an expanse of still water,

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reflecting the shadows of the palace, or whatever it may be. I see birds there with immense beaks and flaming plumage, walking about near the water. I have seen such birds stuffed, but never alive, except in dreams. But I do not remember where the stuffed birds came from.

"I feel that the city is as large as one of our great Western cities here. I do not see it, but I feel it. There is a mighty current of human life flowing through its streets. The people are swarthy and graceful. They look like statues of bronze. Their features are delicate and their hair black and straight. Some of the women are naked to the waist, and exceedingly beautiful. They wear immense earrings and curious ornaments of bright metal. The men wear turbans and brightly colored dresses. Some are very lightly clad. There are so many dressed in white! All speak the same strange language I have told you of, and there are camels and apes and elephants and cattle that are not like our cattle; they have a hump between the head and shoulders."

"Is that all?" asked the Doctor.

"All I can remember."

"Were you ever in India?"

"No, sir."

"Have you never visited India even through the medium of art — books, engravings, photographs?"

"I do not believe I have ever read a single illustrated book upon India. I have seen articles brought

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from India, and some pictures — drawings on rice paper; but this of very late years. I have never seen anything in pictures like the place I have described to you."

"How long have you been dreaming of these places?"

"Well, since I was a boy."

"Was your father ever in India, or your mother?"

"My father was, sir; not my mother. But he died there when I was a child. I was born in Europe."

"Hereditary impressions!" cried the Doctor. "That explains all your stories of metempsychosis. The memories of the father descending to the children, perhaps even to the third and fourth generation. You dream of Indian cities you have never seen and probably never will see. Why? Because the delicate and invisible impressions made upon the brain of an English traveler in India, through the mediums of sight and sound, are inherited by his children born in a colder climate who have never seen the Orient, and will nevertheless be forever haunted by visions of the Far East."

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THE GHOSTLY KISS [1]

THE theatre was full. I cannot remember what they were playing. I did not have time to observe the actors. I only remember how vast the building seemed. Looking back, I saw an ocean of faces stretching away almost beyond the eye's power of definition to the far circles where the seats rose tier above tier in lines of illumination. The ceiling was blue, and in the midst a great mellow lamp hung suspended like a moon, at a height so lofty that I could not see the suspending chain. All the seats were black. I fancied that the theatre was hung with hangings of black velvet, bordered with a silver fringe that glimmered like tears. The audience were all in white.

All in white! — I asked myself whether I was not in some theatre of some tropical city — why all in white? I could not guess. I fancied at moments that I could perceive a moonlit landscape through far distant oriel windows, and the crests of palms casting moving shadows like gigantic spiders. The air was sweet with a strange and a new perfume; it was a drowsy air — a poppied air, in which the waving of innumerable white fans made no rustle, no sound.

There was a strange stillness and a strange silence.

[1] *Item*, July 24, 1880.

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All eyes were turned toward the stage, except my own. I gazed in every direction but that of the stage! I cannot imagine why it was that I rarely looked toward the stage. No one noticed me; no one appeared to perceive that I was the only person in all that vast assembly clad in black — a tiny dark speck in a sea of white light.

Gradually the voices of the actors seemed to me to become fainter and fainter — thin sounds like whispers from another world — a world of ghosts! — and the music seemed not music, but only an echo in the mind of the hearer, like a memory of songs heard and forgotten in forgotten years.

There were faces that I thought strangely familiar — faces I fancied I had seen somewhere else in some other time. But none recognized me.

A woman sat before me — a fair woman with hair as brightly golden as the locks of Aphrodite. I asked my heart why it beat so strangely when I turned my eyes upon her. I felt as if it sought to leap from my breast and fling itself all palpitating under her feet. I watched the delicate movements of her neck, where a few loose bright curls were straying, like strands of gold clinging to a column of ivory; — the soft curve of the cheek flushed by a faint ruddiness like the velvet surface of a half-ripe peach; — the grace of the curving lips — lips sweet as those of the Cnidian Venus, which even after two thousand years still seem humid, as with the

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kisses of the last lover. But the eyes I could not see.

And a strange desire rose within me — an intense wish to kiss those lips. My heart said, Yes; — my reason whispered, No. I thought of the ten thousand thousand eyes that might suddenly be turned upon me. I looked back; and it seemed to me as if the whole theatre had grown vaster! The circles of seats had receded; — the great centre lamp seemed to have mounted higher; — the audience seemed vast as that we dream of in visions of the Last Judgment. And my heart beat so violently that I heard its passionate pulsation, louder than the voices of the actors, and I feared lest it should betray me to all the host of white-clad men and women above me. But none seemed to hear or to see me. I trembled as I thought of the consequences of obeying the mad impulse that became every moment more overpowering and uncontrollable.

And my heart answered, "One kiss of those lips were worth the pain of ten thousand deaths."

I do not remember that I arose. I only remember finding myself beside her, close to her, breathing her perfumed breath, and gazing into eyes deep as the amethystine heaven of a tropical night. I pressed my lips passionately to hers; I felt a thrill of inexpressible delight and triumph; I felt the warm soft lips curl back to meet mine, and give me back my kiss!

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And a great fear suddenly came upon me. And all the multitude of white-clad men and women arose in silence; and ten thousand thousand eyes looked upon me.

I heard a voice, faint, sweet — such a voice as we hear when dead loves visit us in dreams:

"Thou hast kissed me: the compact is sealed forever."

And raising my eyes once more I saw that all the seats were graves and all the white dresses shrouds. Above me a light still shone in the blue roof, but only the light of a white moon in the eternal azure of heaven. White tombs stretched away in weird file to the verge of the horizon; where it had seemed to me that I beheld a play, I saw only a lofty mausoleum; and I knew that the perfume of the night was but the breath of flowers dying upon the tombs!

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THE BLACK CUPID[1]

THERE was a small picture hanging in the room; and I took the light to examine it. I do not know why I could not sleep. Perhaps it was the excitement of travel.

The gilded frame, massive and richly moulded, inclosed one of the strangest paintings I had ever seen, a woman's head lying on a velvet pillow, one arm raised and one bare shoulder with part of a beautiful bosom relieved against a dark background. As I said, the painting was small. The young woman was evidently reclining upon her right side; but only her head, elevated upon the velvet pillow, her white throat, one beautiful arm and part of the bosom was visible.

With consummate art the painter had contrived that the spectator should feel as though leaning over the edge of the couch — not visible in the picture — so as to bring his face close to the beautiful face on the pillow. It was one of the most charming heads a human being ever dreamed of; such a delicate bloom on the cheeks; — such a soft, humid light in the half-closed eyes; — such sun-bright hair; — such carnation lips; — such an oval outline! And all this relieved against a deep black background. In the lobe of the left ear I noticed a curious earring — a tiny Cupid wrought in black jet, suspending him-

[1] *Item*, July 29, 1880.

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self by his bow, which he held by each end, as if trying to pull it away from the tiny gold chain which fettered it to the beautiful ear, delicate and faintly rosy as a seashell. What a strange earring it was! I wondered if the black Cupid presided over unlawful loves, unblest amours!

But the most curious thing about the picture was the attitude and aspect of the beautiful woman. Her head, partly thrown back, with half-closed eyes and tender smile, seemed to be asking a kiss. The lips pouted expectantly. I almost fancied I could feel her perfumed breath. Under the rounded arm I noticed a silky floss of bright hair in tiny curls. The arm was raised as if to be flung about the neck of the person from whom the kiss was expected. I was astonished by the art of the painter. No photograph could have rendered such effects, however delicately colored; no photograph could have reproduced the gloss of the smooth shoulder, the veins, the smallest details! But the picture had a curious fascination. It produced an effect upon me as if I were looking at living beauty, a rosy and palpitating reality. Under the unsteady light of the lamp I once fancied that I saw the lips move, the eyes glisten! The head seemed to advance itself out of the canvas as though to be kissed. Perhaps it was very foolish; but I could not help kissing it — not once but a hundred times; and then I suddenly became frightened. Stories of bleeding statues and mysterious pictures and haunted tapestry came

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to my mind; and alone in a strange house and a strange city I felt oddly nervous. I placed the light on the table and went to bed.

But it was impossible to sleep. Whenever I began to doze a little, I saw the beautiful head on the pillow close beside me — the same smile, the same lips, the golden hair, the silky floss under the caressing arm. I rose, dressed myself, lit a pipe, blew out the light, and smoked in the dark, until the faint blue tints of day stole in through the windows. Afar off I saw the white teeth of the Sierra flush rosily, and heard the rumbling of awakening traffic.

"Las cinco menos quarto, señor," cried the servant as he knocked upon my door — "tiempo para levantarse."

Before leaving I asked the landlord about the picture.

He answered with a smile, "It was painted by a madman, señor."

"But who?" I asked. "Mad or not, he was a master genius."

"I do not even remember his name. He is dead. They allowed him to paint in the madhouse. It kept his mind tranquil. I obtained the painting from his family after his death. They refused to accept money for it, saying they were glad to give it away."

I had forgotten all about the painting when some five years after I happened to be passing through a

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little street in Mexico City. My attention was suddenly attracted by some articles I saw in the window of a dingy shop, kept by a Spanish Jew. A pair of earrings — two little Cupids wrought in black jet, holding their bows above their heads, the bows being attached by slender gold chains to the hooks of the earrings!

I remembered the picture in a moment! And that night!

"I do not really care to sell them, señor," said the swarthy jeweler, "unless I get my price. You cannot get another pair like them. I know who made them! They were made for an artist who came here expressly with the design. He wished to make a present to a certain woman."

"Una Méjicana?"

"No, Americana."

"Fair, with dark eyes — about twenty, perhaps, at that time — a little rosy?"

"Why, did you know her? They used to call her Josefita. You know he killed her? Jealousy. They found her still smiling, as if she had been struck while asleep. A 'punal.' I got the earrings back at a sale."

"And the artist?"

"Died at P——, mad! Some say he was mad when he killed her. If you really want the earrings, I will let you have them for sixty pesos. They cost a hundred and fifty."

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WHEN I WAS A FLOWER [1]

I WAS once a flower — fair and large. My snowy chalice, filled with a perfume so rich as to intoxicate the rainbow-winged insects that perched upon it, recalled to those who beheld me the beauty of those myrrhine cups used at the banquets of the old Cæsars.

The bees sang to me all through the bright summer; the winds caressed me in the hours of sultriness; the Spirit of the Dew filled my white cup by night. Great plants, with leaves broader than the ears of elephants, overshadowed me as with a canopy of living emerald.

Far off I heard the river singing its mystic and everlasting hymn and the songs of a thousand birds. By night I peeped up through my satiny petals at the infinite procession of the stars; and by day I turned forever to the eye of the sun my heart of yellow gold.

Hummingbirds with jeweled breasts, flying from the Rising of the Sun, nestled near me and drank the perfumed dews left lingering in my chalice, and sang to me of the wonders of unknown lands — of black roses that grew only in the gardens of magicians and spectral lilies whose perfume is death which open their hearts only to tropical moons.

[1] *Item*, August 13, 1880.

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They severed the emerald thread of my life, and placed me in her hair. I did not feel the slow agony of death, like the fettered fireflies that glimmered as stars in the night-darkness of those splendid tresses. I felt the perfume of my life mingling in her blood and entering the secret chambers of her heart; and I mourned that I was but a flower.

That night we passed away together. I know not how she died. I had hoped to share her eternal sleep; but a weird wind entering through the casement rent my dead leaves asunder and scattered them in white ruin upon the pillow. Yet my ghost like a faint perfume still haunted the silent chamber and hovered about the flames of the waxen tapers.

Other flowers, not of my race, are blooming above her place of rest. It is her blood that lives in the rosiness of their petals; her breath that lends perfume to their leaves; her life that vitalizes their veins of diaphanous green. But in the wizard hours of the night, the merciful Spirit of the Dew, who mourns the death of summer day, bears me aloft and permits me to mingle with the crystal tears which fall upon her grave.

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METEMPSYCHOSIS [1]

"THOSE theories which you call wild dreams," cried the Doctor, rising to his feet as he spoke, his features glowing with enthusiasm under the moon, "are but the mystic veils with which the eternal Isis veils her awful face. Your deep German philosophy is shallow — your modern pantheism vaguer than smoke — compared with the mighty knowledge of the East. The theories of the greatest modern thinkers were taught in India before the name of Rome was heard in the world; and our scientific researches of to-day simply confirm most ancient Oriental beliefs, which we, in our ignorance, have spoken of as dreams of madmen."

"Yes, but surely, you cannot otherwise characterize the idea of the transmigration of souls?"

"Ah! souls, souls," replied the stranger, drawing at his cigar until it glowed like a carbuncle in the night — "we have nothing to do with souls, but with facts. The metempsychosis is only the philosophic symbol of a vast natural fact, grotesque only to those who understand it not,— just as the most hideous Indian idol, diamond-eyed and skull-chapleted, represents to the Brahmin a hidden truth incomprehensible to the people. Conscious

[1] *Item*, September 7, 1880.

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of the eternity of Matter and Force; — knowing that the substance of whirling universes, like clay in the hands of the potter, has been and is being and will be forever fashioned into myriad shifting forms; — knowing that shapes alone are evanescent, and that each atom of our living bodies has been from the beginning and will always be, even after the mountains have melted like wax in the heat of a world's dissolution — it is impossible to regard the theory of transmigration as a mere fantasy. Each particle of our flesh has lived before our birth through millions of transmigrations more wonderful than any poet has dared to dream of; and the life-force that throbs in the heart of each one of us has throbbed for all time in the eternal metempsychosis of the universe. Each atom of our blood has doubtless circulated, before our very civilization commenced, through the veins of millions of living creatures — soaring, crawling, or dwelling in the depths of the sea; and each molecule that floats in a sunbeam has, perhaps, vibrated to the thrill of human passion. The soil under my foot has lived and loved; and Nature, refashioning the paste in her awful laboratory into new forms of being, shall make this clay to live and hope and suffer again. Dare I even whisper to you of the past transformations of the substance of the rosiest lips you have kissed, or the brightest eyes which have mirrored your look? We have lived innumerable lives in the past; we have lived in the flowers, in the birds, in

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the emerald abysses of the ocean; — we have slept in the silence of solid rocks, and moved in the swells of the thunder-chanting sea; — we have been women as well as men; — we have changed our sex a thousand times like the angels of the Talmud; and we shall continue the everlasting transmigration long after the present universe has passed away and the fires of the stars have burned themselves out. Can one know these things and laugh at the theories of the East?"

"But the theory of Cycles —"

"It is not less of a solemn truth. Knowing that Force and Matter are eternal, we know also that the kaleidoscope of changing shapes must whirl forever. But as the colored particles within a kaleidoscope are limited, only a certain number of combinations may be produced. Are not the elements of eternal matter limited? If so, their conbinations must also be; and as the everlasting force must forever continue to create forms, it can only repeat its work. Then, we must believe that all which has already happened must have happened before throughout all time, and will happen again at vast intervals through all eternity. It is not the first time we have sat together on the night of September 6; — we have done so in other Septembers, yet the same; and in other New Orleanses, the same yet not the same. We must have done it centrillions of times before, and will do it centrillions of times again through the æons of the future. I shall

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be again as I am, yet different; I shall smoke the same cigar, yet a different one. The same chair with the same scratches on its polished back will be there for you to sit in; and we shall hold the same conversation. The same good-natured lady will bring us a bottle of wine of the same quality; and the same persons will be reunited in this quaint Creole house. Trees like these will fling their shadows on the pavement; and above us shall we again behold as now the golden swarm of worlds sparkling in the abysses of the infinite night. There will be new stars and a new universe, yet we shall know it only as we know it at this moment that centrillions of years ago we must have suffered and hoped and loved as we do in these weary years. Good-bye, friends!"

He flung the stump of his cigar among the vines, where it expired in a shower of rosy sparks; and his footsteps died away forever. NAY, not forever; for though we should see him no more in this life, shall we not see him again throughout the Cycles and the Æons? YEA, alas, forever; for even though we should see him again throughout the Cycles and the Æons, will it not be so that he always departeth under the same circumstances and at the same moment, in sæcula sæculorum?

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THE UNDYING ONE [1]

I HAVE lived for three thousand years; I am weary of men and of the world: this earth has become too small for such as I; this sky seems a gray vault of lead about to sink down and crush me.

There is not a silver hair in my head; the dust of thirty centuries has not dimmed my eyes. Yet I am weary of the earth.

I speak a thousand tongues; and the faces of the continents are familiar to me as the characters of a book; the heavens have unrolled themselves before mine eyes as a scroll; and the entrails of the earth have no secrets for me.

I have sought knowledge in the deepest deeps of ocean gulfs; — in the waste places where sands shift their yellow waves, with a dry and bony sound; — in the corruption of charnel houses and the hidden horrors of the catacombs; — amid the virgin snows of Dwalagiri; — in the awful labyrinths of forests untrodden by man; — in the wombs of dead volcanoes; — in lands where the surface of lake or stream is studded with the backs of hippopotami or enameled with the mail of crocodiles; — at the extremities of the world where spectral glaciers float over inky seas; — in those strange parts where no life is, where the mountains

[1] *Item*, September 18, 1880.

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are rent asunder by throes of primeval earthquake, and where the eyes behold only a world of parched and jagged ruin, like the Moon — of dried-up seas and river channels worn out by torrents that ceased to roll long ere the birth of man.

All the knowledge of all the centuries, all the craft and skill and cunning of man in all things — are mine, and yet more!

For Life and Death have whispered me their most ancient secrets; and all that men have vainly sought to learn has for me no mystery.

Have I not tasted all the pleasures of this petty world — pleasures that would have consumed to ashes a frame less mighty than my own?

I have built temples with the Egyptians, the princes of India, and the Cæsars; I have aided conquerors to vanquish a world; I have reveled through nights of orgiastic fury with rulers of Thebes and Babylon; I have been drunk with wine and blood!

The kingdoms of the earth and all their riches and glory have been mine.

With that lever which Archimedes desired I have uplifted empires and overthrown dynasties. Nay! like a god, I have held the world in the hollow of my hand.

All that the beauty of youth and the love of woman can give to make joyful the hearts of men, have I possessed; no Assyrian king, no Solomon, no ruler of Samarcand, no Caliph of Bagdad, no Rajah of the most eastern East, has ever loved as I; and

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in my myriad loves I have beheld the realization of all that human thought had conceived or human heart desired or human hand crystallized into that marble of Pentelicus called imperishable — yet less enduring than these iron limbs of mine.

And ruddy I remain like that rosy granite of Egypt on which kings carved their dreams of eternity.

But I am weary of this world!

I have attained all that I sought; I have desired nothing that I have not obtained — save that I now vainly desire and yet shall never obtain.

There is no comrade for me in all this earth; no mind that can comprehend me; no heart that can love me for what I am.

Should I utter what I know, no living creature could understand; should I write my knowledge no human brain could grasp my thought. Wearing the shape of a man, capable of doing all that man can do — yet more perfectly than man can ever do — I must live as these my frail companions, and descend to the level of their feeble minds, and imitate their puny works, though owning the wisdom of a god! How mad were those Greek dreamers who sang of gods descending to the level of humanity that they might love a woman!

In other centuries I feared to beget a son — a son to whom I might have bequeathed my own immortal youth; jealous that I was of sharing my secret with any terrestrial creature! Now the time

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has past. No son of mine born in this age, of this degenerate race, could ever become a worthy companion for me. Oceans would change their beds, and new continents arise from the emerald gulfs, and new races appear upon the earth ere he could comprehend the least of my thoughts!

The future holds no pleasure in reserve for me: — I have foreseen the phases of a myriad million years. All that has been will be again: — all that will be has been before. I am solitary as one in a desert; for men have become as puppets in my eyes, and the voice of living woman hath no sweetness for my ears.

Only to the voices of the winds and of the sea do I hearken; — yet do even these weary me, for they murmured me the same music and chanted me the same hymns, among aged woods or ancient rocks, three thousand years ago!

To-night I shall have seen the moon wax and wane thirty-six thousand nine hundred times! And my eyes are weary of gazing upon its white face.

Ah! I might be willing to live on through endless years, could I but transport myself to other glittering worlds, illuminated by double suns and encircled by galaxies of huge moons! — other worlds in which I might find knowledge equal to my own, and minds worthy of my companionship — and — perhaps — women that I might love — not hollow Emptinesses, not El-women like the spectres of Scandinavian fable, and like the frail mothers of

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this puny terrestrial race, but creatures of immortal beauty worthy to create immortal children!

Alas! — there is a power mightier than my will, deeper than my knowledge — a Force "deaf as fire, blind as the night," which binds me forever to this world of men.

Must I remain like Prometheus chained to his rock in never-ceasing pain, with vitals eternally gnawed by the sharp beak of the vulture of Despair, or dissolve this glorious body of mine forever?

I might live till the sun grows dim and cold; yet am I too weary to live longer.

I shall die utterly — even as the beast dieth, even as the poorest being dieth that bears the shape of man; and leave no written thought behind that human thought can ever grasp. I shall pass away as a flying smoke, as a shadow, as a bubble in the crest of a wave in mid-ocean, as the flame of a taper blown out; and none shall ever know that which I was. This heart that has beaten unceasingly for three thousand years; these feet that have trod the soil of all parts of the earth; these hands that have moulded the destinies of nations; this brain that contains a thousandfold more wisdom than all the children of the earth ever knew, shall soon cease to be. And yet to shatter and destroy the wondrous mechanism of this brain — a brain worthy of the gods men dream of — a temple in which all the archives of terrestrial knowledge are stored!

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The moon is up! O death-white dead world! — couldst thou too feel, how gladly wouldst thou cease thy corpselike circlings in the Night of Immensity and follow me to that darker immensity where even dreams are dead!

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THE VISION OF THE DEAD CREOLE [1]

THE waters of the Gulf were tepid in the warmth of the tropical night. A huge moon looked down upon me as I swam toward the palm-fringed beach; and looking back I saw the rigging of the vessel sharply cut against its bright face. There was no sound! The sea-ripples kissed the brown sands silently, as if afraid; faint breezes laden with odors of saffron and cinnamon and drowsy flowers came over the water; — the stars seemed vaster than in other nights; — the fires of the Southern Cross burned steadily without one diamond-twinkle; — I paused a moment in terror; — for it seemed I could hear the night breathe — in long, weird sighs. The fancy passed as quickly as it came. The ship's bells struck the first hour of the morning. I stood again on the shore where I had played as a child, and saw through the palms the pale houses of the quaint city beyond, whence I had fled with blood upon my hands twenty-seven long years before.

Was it a witch-night, that the city slumbered so deep a sleep and the sereno slept at his post as I passed? I know not, but it was well for him that he slept! I passed noiselessly as the Shadow of Death through the ancient gates, and through the shadows

[1] *Item*, September 25, 1880.

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flung down by the projecting balconies, and along the side of the plaza unilluminated by the gaze of the tropical moon, and where the towers of the cathedral made goblin shapes of darkness on the pavement; and along narrow ways where the star-sprinkled blue of heaven above seemed but a ribbon of azure, jagged and gashed along its edges by sharp projections of balconies; and beyond again into the white moonshine, where orange trees filled the warm air with a perfume as that of a nuptial chamber; and beyond, yet farther, where ancient cypresses with roots and branches gnarled and twisted as by the tortures of a thousand years of agony, bowed weirdly over the Place of Tombs.

Gigantic spiders spun their webs under the moon between the walls of the tombs; — vipers glided over my feet; — the vampire hovered above under the stars; and fireflies like corpse-lights circled about the resting-places of the dead. Great vines embraced the marbles green with fungus-growths; — the ivy buried its lizard feet in the stones; — lianas had woven a veil, thick as that of Isis, across the epitaphs carven above the graves. But I found HER tomb! I would have reached it, as I had sworn, even in the teeth of Death and Hell!

I tore asunder the venomous plants which clung to the marble like reptiles; — but the blood poured from my hands upon her name; — and I could not find one unreddened spot to kiss. And I heard the

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blood from my fingers dripping with a thick, dead sound, as of molten lead, upon the leaves of the uptorn plants at my feet.

And the dead years rose from their graves of mist and stood around me! I saw the moss-green terrace where I received her first kiss that filled my veins with madness; — the marble urns with their carved bas-reliefs of naked dancing boys; — the dead fountain choked with water-lilies; — the monstrous flowers that opened their hearts to the moon. And SHE! — the sinuous outlines of that body of Corinthian bronze unconcealed by the feathery lightness of the white robe she wore; — the Creole eyes; — the pouting and passionate mouth; — and that cruel, sphinx-smile, that smile of Egypt, eternally pitiless, eternally mystical — the smile she wore when I flung myself like a worm before her to kiss her feet, and vainly shrieked to her to trample upon me, to spit upon me! And after my fierce moment of vengeance, the smile of Egypt still remained upon her dark face, as though moulded in everlasting bronze.

There was no rustle among the lianas, no stir among the dead leaves; yet SHE stood again before me! My heart seemed to cease its beatings; — a chill as of those nights in which I had sailed Antarctic seas passed over me! Robed in white as in the buried years, with lights like fireflies in her hair,

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and the same dark, elfish smile! And suddenly the chill passed away with a fierce cataclysm of the blood, as though each of its cells were heated by volcanic fire; — for the strange words of the Hebrew canticle came to me like a far echo —

LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH!

I burst the fetters with which horror had chained my voice; — I spake to her; I wept — I wept tears of blood!

And the old voice came to me, argentine and low and mockingly sweet as the voices of birds that call to each other through the fervid West Indian night —

"I knew thou wouldst come back to me — howsoever long thou mightst wander under other skies and over other seas.

"Didst thou dream that I was dead? Nay, I die not so quickly! I have lived through all these years. I shall live on; and thou must return hither again to visit me like a thief in the night.

"Knowest thou how I have lived? I have lived in the bitter tears thou hast wept through all these long years; — the agony of the remorse that seized thee in silent nights and lonesome wastes; — in the breath of thy youth and life exhaled in passionate agony when no human eyes beheld thee; — in the images that haunt thy dreams and make it a horror for thee to find thyself alone! Yet wouldst thou kiss me —"

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I looked upon her again in the white light; — I saw the same weirdly beautiful face, the same smile of the sphinx; — I saw the vacant tomb yawning to its entrails; — I saw its shadow — my shadow — lying sharply upon the graves; — and I saw that the tall white figure before me *cast no shadow before the moon!*

And suddenly under the stars, sonorous and vibrant as far cathedral bells, the voices of the awakening watchmen chanted — Ave Maria Purísima! — las tres de la mañana, y tiempo sereno!

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THE NAME ON THE STONE [1]

"As surely as the wild bird seeks the summer, you will come back," she whispered. "Is there a drop of blood in your veins that does not grow ruddier and warmer at the thought of me? Does not your heart beat quicker at this moment because I am here? It belongs to me; — it obeys me in spite of your feeble will; — it will remain my slave when you are gone. You have bewitched yourself at my lips; I hold you as a bird is held by an invisible thread; and my thread, invisible and intangible, is stronger than your will. Fly: but you can no longer fly beyond the circle in which my wish confines you. Go: but I shall come to you in dreams of the night; and you will be awakened by the beating of your own heart to find yourself alone with darkness and memory. Sleep in whose arms you will, I shall come like a ghost between you; kiss a thousand lips, but it will be I that shall receive them. Though you circle the earth in your wanderings, you will never be able to leave my memory behind you; and your pulse will quicken at recollections of me whether you find yourself under Indian suns or Northern lights. You lie when you say you do not love me! — your heart would fling itself under my feet could it escape from its living prison! You will come back."

[1] *Item*, October 9, 1880.

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And having vainly sought rest through many vainly spent years, I returned to her. It was a night of wild winds and fleeting shadows and strange clouds that fled like phantoms before the storm and across the face of the moon. "You are a cursed witch," I shrieked, "but I have come back!"

And she, placing a finger — white as the waxen tapers that are burned at the feet of the dead — upon my lips, only smiled and whispered, "Come with me."

And I followed her.

The thunder muttered in the east; the horizon pulsated with lightnings; the night-birds screamed as we reached the iron gates of the burial-ground, which swung open with a groan at her touch.

Noiselessly she passed through the ranges of the graves; and I saw the mounds flame when her feet touched them — flame with a cold white dead flame like the fire of the glow-worm.

Was it an illusion of broken moonlight and flying clouds, or did the dead rise and follow us like a bridal train?

And was it only the vibration of the thunder, or did the earth quake when I stood upon *that* grave?

"Look not behind you even for an instant," she muttered, "or you are lost."

But there came to me a strange desire to read the name graven upon the moss-darkened stone; and even as it came the storm unveiled the face of the moon.

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And the dark shadow at my side whispered, "Read it not!"

And the moon veiled herself again. "I cannot go! I cannot go!" I whispered passionately, "until I have read the name upon this stone."

Then a flash of lightning in the east revealed to me the name; and an agony of memory came upon me; and I shrieked it to the flying clouds and the wan lights of heaven!

Again the earth quaked under my feet; and a white Shape rose from the bosom of the grave like an exhalation and stood before me: I felt the caress of lips shadowy as those of the fair phantom women who haunt the dreams of youth; and the echo of a dead voice, faint as the whisper of a summer wind, murmured: "Love, love is stronger than Death! — I come back from the eternal night to save thee!"

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APHRODITE AND THE KING'S PRISONER [1]

COLUMNS of Corinthian marble stretching away in mighty perspective and rearing their acanthus capitals a hundred feet above the polished marble from which they rose; — antique mosaics from the years of Hadrian; — Pompeiian frescoes limning all the sacrifices made to Aphrodite; — naked bronzes uplifting marvelous candelabra; — fantastically beautiful oddities in terra cotta; — miracles of art in Pentelic marble; — tripods supporting vessels of burning spices which filled the palace with perfumes as intoxicating as the Song of Solomon; — and in the midst of all a range of melodious fountains amid whose waters white nymphs showed their smooth thighs of stone and curved their marble figures into all the postures that harmonize with beauty. Vast gardens of myrtle and groves of laurel, mystic and shadowy as those of Daphne, surrounded the palace with a world of deep green, broken only at intervals by the whiteness of Parian dryads; — flowers formed a living carpet upon the breadth of the terraces, and a river washed the eastern walls and marble stairways of the edifice. It was a world of wonders and of marvels, of riches and rarities, though created by the vengeance of a king. There was but one human life amid all that

[1] *Item*, October 12, 1880.

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enchantment of Greek marble, of petrified loveliness and beauty made motionless in bronze. No servants were ever seen; — no voice was ever heard; — there was no exit from that strange paradise. It was said that the king's prisoner was served by invisible hands; — that tables covered with luxurious viands rose up through the marble pavements at regular hours; — and the fumes of the richest wines of the Levant, sweetened with honey, perfumed the chamber chosen for his repasts. All that art could inspire, all that gold might obtain, all that the wealth of a world could create were for him — save only the sound of a human voice and the sight of a human face. To madden in the presence of unattainable loveliness, to consume his heart in wild longings to realize the ravishing myth of Pygmalion, to die of a dream of beauty — such was the sentence of the king!

Lovelier than all other lovelinesses created in stone or gem or eternal bronze by the hands of men whose lives were burnt out in longings for a living idol worthy of their dreams of perfect beauty — a figure of Aphrodite displayed the infinite harmony of her naked loveliness upon a pedestal of black marble, so broad and so highly polished that it reflected the divine poem of her body like a mirror of ebony — the Foam-born rising from the silent deeps of a black Ægean. The delicate mellowness of the antique marble admirably mocked the tint of

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human flesh; — a tropical glow, a golden warmth seemed to fill the motionless miracle — this dream of love frozen into marble by a genius greater than Praxiteles; no modern restorer had given to the attitude of this bright divinity the Christian anachronism of shame. With arms extended as if to welcome a lover, all the exquisite curves of her bosom faced the eyes of the beholder; and with one foot slightly advanced she seemed in the act of stepping forward to bestow a kiss. And a brazen tablet let into the black marble of the pedestal bore, in five learned tongues, the strange inscription:

Created by the hand of one maddened by love, I madden all who gaze upon me. Mortal, condemned to live in solitude with me, prepare thyself to die of love at my feet. The old gods, worshiped by youth and beauty, are dead; and no immortal power can place a living heart in this stony bosom or lend to these matchless limbs the warm flexibility and rosiness of life.

Around the chamber of the statue ran a marble wainscoting chiseled with Bacchanal bas-reliefs — a revel of rude dryads and fauns linking themselves in amorous interlacings; — upon an altar of porphyry flickered the low flame of the holy fire fed with leaves of the myrtle sacred to love; — doves for the sacrifice were cooing and wooing in the marble court without; — a sound of crystal water came from a fountain near the threshold, where beautiful feminine monsters, whose lithe flanks blended into serpent coils, upheld in their arms

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of bronze the fantastic cup from which the living waters leapt; a balmy, sensuous air, bearing on its wings the ghosts of perfumes known to the voluptuaries of Corinth, filled the softly lighted sanctuary; — and on either side of the threshold stood two statues, respectively in white and black marble — Love, the blond brother of Death; Death, the dark brother of Love, with torch forever extinguished.

And the King knew that the Prisoner kept alive the sacred fire, and poured out the blood of the doves at the feet of the goddess, who smiled with the eternal smile of immortal youth and changeless loveliness and the consciousness of the mighty witchery of her enchanting body. For secret watchers came to the palace and said:

"When he first beheld the awful holiness of her beauty, he fell prostrate as one bereft of life, and long so remained."

And the King musingly made answer:

"Aphrodite is no longer to be appeased with the blood of doves, but only with the blood of men — men of mighty hearts and volcanic passion. He is youthful and strong and an artist! — and he must soon die. Let the weapons of death be mercifully placed at the feet of Aphrodite, that her victim may be able to offer himself up in sacrifice."

Now the secret messengers were eunuchs. And they came again to the palace, and whispered in the ears of the silver-bearded King:

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"He has again poured out the blood of the doves, and he sings the sacred Hymn of Homer, and kisses her marble body until his lips bleed; — and the goddess still smiles the smile of perfect loveliness that is pitiless."

And the King answered:

"It is even as I desire."

A second time the messengers came to the palace, and whispered in the ears of the iron-eyed King:

"He bathes her feet with his tears: his heart is tortured as though crushed by fingers of marble; he no longer eats or slumbers, neither drinks he the waters of the Fountain of Bronze; — and the goddess still smiles the mocking smile of eternal and perfect loveliness that is without pity and without mercy."

And the King answered:

"It is even as I had wished."

So one morning, in the first rosy flush of sunrise, they found the Prisoner dead, his arms madly flung about the limbs of the goddess in a last embrace, and his cheek resting upon her marble foot. All the blood of his heart, gushing from a wound in his breast, had been poured out upon the pedestal of black marble; and it trickled down over the brazen tablet inscribed with five ancient tongues, and over the mosaic pavement, and over the marble threshold past the statue of Love who is the brother of Death, and the statue of Death who is the brother of Love,

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until it mingled with the waters of the Fountain of Bronze from which the sacrificial doves did drink.

And around the bodies of the serpent-women the waters blushed rosily; and above the dead, the goddess still smiled the sweet and mocking smile of eternal and perfect loveliness that hath no pity.

"Thrice seven days he has lived at her feet," muttered the King; "yet even I, hoary with years, dare not trust myself to look upon her for an hour!" And a phantom of remorse, like a shadow from Erebus, passed across his face of granite. "Let her be broken in pieces," he said, "even as a vessel of glass is broken."

But the King's servants, beholding the white witchery of her rhythmic limbs, fell upon their faces; and there was no man found to raise his hand against the Medusa of beauty whose loveliness withered men's hearts as leaves are crisped by fire. And Aphrodite smiled down upon them with the smile of everlasting youth and immortal beauty and eternal mockery of human passion.

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THE FOUNTAIN OF GOLD [1]

THIS is the tale told in the last hours of a summer night to the old Spanish priest in the Hôtel Dieu, by an aged wanderer from the Spanish Americas; and I write it almost as I heard it from the priest's lips:

I COULD not sleep. The strange odors of the flowers; the sense of romantic excitement which fills a vivid imagination in a new land; the sight of a new heaven illuminated by unfamiliar constellations, and a new world which seemed to me a very garden of Eden — perhaps all of these added to beget the spirit of unrest which consumed me as with a fever. I rose and went out under the stars. I heard the heavy breathing of the soldiers, whose steel corselets glimmered in the ghostly light; the occasional snorting of the horses; the regular tread of the sentries guarding the sleep of their comrades. An inexplicable longing came upon me to wander alone into the deep forest beyond, such a longing as in summer days in Seville had seized me when I heard the bearded soldiers tell of the enchantment of the New World. I did not dream of danger; for in those days I feared neither God nor devil, and the Commander held me the most desperate of that desperate band of men. I strode out beyond the lines; — the grizzled sentry growled out a rough protest as

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I received his greeting in sullen silence; — I cursed him and passed on.

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The deep sapphire of that marvelous Southern night paled to pale amethyst; then the horizon brightened into yellow behind the crests of the palm trees; and at last the diamond-fires of the Southern Cross faded out. Far behind me I heard the Spanish bugles, ringing their call through the odorous air of that tropical morning, quaveringly sweet in the distance, faint as music from another world. Yet I did not dream of retracing my steps. As in a dream I wandered on under the same strange impulse, and the bugle-call again rang out, but fainter than before. I do not know if it was the strange perfume of the strange flowers, or the odors of the spice-bearing trees, or the caressing warmth of the tropical air, or witchcraft; but a new sense of feeling came to me. I would have given worlds to have been able to weep: I felt the old fierceness die out of my heart; — wild doves flew down from the trees and perched upon my shoulders, and I laughed to find myself caressing them — I whose hands were red with blood, and whose heart was black with crime.

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And the day broadened and brightened into a paradise of emerald and gold; birds no larger than bees, but painted with strange metallic fires of color, hummed about me; — parrots chattered in

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the trees; — apes swung themselves with fantastic agility from branch to branch; — a million million blossoms of inexpressible beauty opened their silky hearts to the sun; — and the drowsy perfume of the dreamy woods became more intoxicating. It seemed to me a land of witchcraft, such as the Moors told us of in Spain, when they spoke of countries lying near the rising of the sun. And it came to pass that I found myself dreaming of the Fountain of Gold which Ponce de Leon sought.

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Then it seemed to me that the trees became loftier. The palms looked older than the deluge, and their cacique-plumes seemed to touch the azure of heaven. And suddenly I found myself within a great clear space, ringed in by the primeval trees so lofty that all within their circle was bathed in verdant shadow. The ground was carpeted with moss and odorous herbs and flowers, so thickly growing that the foot made no sound upon their elastic leaves and petals; and from the circle of the trees on every side the land sloped down to a vast basin filled with sparkling water, and there was a lofty jet in the midst of the basin, such as I had seen in the Moorish courts of Granada. The water was deep and clear as the eyes of a woman in her first hours of love; — I saw gold-sprinkled sands far below, and rainbow lights where the rain of the fountain made ripples. It seemed strange to me that the jet leaped from nothing formed by the

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hand of man; it was as though a mighty underflow forced it upward in a gush above the bright level of the basin. I unbuckled my armor and doffed my clothing, and plunged into the fountain with delight. It was far deeper than I expected; the crystalline purity of the water had deceived me — I could not even dive to the bottom. I swam over to the fountain jet and found to my astonishment that while the waters of the basin were cool as the flow of a mountain spring, the leaping column of living crystal in its centre was warm as blood!

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I felt an inexpressible exhilaration from my strange bath; I gamboled in the water like a boy; I even cried aloud to the woods and the birds; and the parrots shouted back my cries from the heights of the palms. And, leaving the fountain, I felt no fatigue or hunger; but when I lay down a deep and leaden sleep came upon me, — such a sleep as a child sleeps in the arms of its mother.

. . . . . .

When I awoke a woman was bending over me. She was wholly unclad, and with her perfect beauty and the tropical tint of her skin, she looked like a statue of amber. Her flowing black hair was interwoven with white flowers; her eyes were very large, and dark and deep, and fringed with silky lashes. She wore no ornaments of gold, like the Indian girls I had seen — only the white flowers in her hair. I looked at her wonderingly as upon an angel; and

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with her tall and slender grace she seemed to me, indeed, of another world. For the first time in all that dark life of mine, I felt fear in the presence of a woman; but a fear not unmixed with pleasure. I spoke to her in Spanish; but she only opened her dark eyes more widely, and smiled. I made signs; she brought me fruits and clear water in a gourd; and as she bent over me again, I kissed her.

. . . . . .

Why should I tell of our love, Padre? — let me only say that those were the happiest years of my life. Earth and heaven seemed to have embraced in that strange land; it was Eden; it was paradise; never-wearying love, eternal youth! No other mortal ever knew such happiness as I; — yet none ever suffered so agonizing a loss. We lived upon fruits and the water of the Fountain; — our bed was the moss and the flowers; the doves were our playmates; — the stars our lamps. Never storm or cloud; — never rain or heat; — only the tepid summer drowsy with sweet odors, the songs of birds and murmuring water; the waving palms, the jewel-breasted minstrels of the woods who chanted to us through the night. And we never left the little valley. My armor and my good rapier rusted away; my garments were soon worn out; but there we needed no raiment, it was all warmth and light and repose. "We shall never grow old here," she whispered. But when I asked her if that was, indeed, the Fountain of Youth, she only smiled and placed her

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finger upon her lips. Neither could I ever learn her name. I could not acquire her tongue; yet she had learned mine with marvelous quickness. We never had a quarrel; — I could never find heart to even frown upon her. She was all gentleness, playfulness, loveliness — but what do you care, Padre, to hear all these things?

. . . . . .

Did I say our happiness was perfect? No: there was one strange cause of anxiety which regularly troubled me. Each night, while lying in her arms, I heard the Spanish bugle-call — far and faint and ghostly as a voice from the dead. It seemed like a melancholy voice calling to me. And whenever the sound floated to us, I felt that she trembled, and wound her arms faster about me, and she would weep until I kissed away her tears. And through all those years I heard the bugle-call. Did I say years? — nay, *centuries!* — for in that land one never grows old; I heard it through centuries after all my companions were dead.

The priest crossed himself under the lamplight, and murmured a prayer. "Continue, hijo mio," he said at last; "tell me all."

It was anger, Padre; I wished to see for myself where the sounds came from that tortured my life. And I know not why she slept so deeply that night. As I bent over to kiss her, she moaned in her dreams, and I saw a crystal tear glimmer on the dark fringe of her eyes — and then that cursed bugle-call —

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The old man's voice failed a moment. He gave a feeble cough, spat blood, and went on:

I have little time to tell you more, Padre. I never could find my way back again to the valley. I lost her forever. When I wandered out among men, they spoke another language that I could not speak; and the world was changed. When I met Spaniards at last, they spoke a tongue unlike what I heard in my youth. I did not dare to tell my story. They would have confined me with madmen. I speak the Spanish of other centuries; and the men of my own nation mock my quaint ways. Had I lived much in this new world of yours, I should have been regarded as mad, for my thoughts and ways are not of to-day; but I have spent my life among the swamps of the tropics, with the python and the cayman, in the heart of untrodden forests and by the shores of rivers that have no names, and the ruins of dead Indian cities,— until my strength died and my hair became white in looking for her.

"My son," cried the old priest, "banish these evil thoughts. I have heard your story; and any, save a priest, would believe you mad. I believe all you have told me; — the legends of the Church contain much that is equally strange. You have been a great sinner in your youth; and God has punished you by making your sins the very instrument of your punishment. Yet has He not preserved you through the centuries that you might repent? Banish all thoughts of the demon who still tempts you in the shape of a woman; repent and commend your soul to God, that I may absolve you."

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"Repent!" said the dying man, fixing upon the priest's face his great black eyes, which flamed up again as with the fierce fires of his youth; "repent, father? I cannot repent! I love her! — I love her! And if there be a life beyond death, I shall love her through all time and eternity: more than my own soul I love her! — more than my hope of heaven! — more than my fear of death and hell!"

The priest fell on his knees, and, covering his face, prayed fervently. When he lifted his eyes again, the soul had passed away unabsolved; but there was such a smile upon the dead face that the priest wondered, and, forgetting the Miserere upon his lips, involuntarily muttered: "He hath found Her at last." And the east brightened; and touched by the magic of the rising sun, the mists above his rising formed themselves into a Fountain of Gold.

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A DEAD LOVE [1]

He knew no rest; for all his dreams were haunted by her; and when he sought love, she came as the dead come between the living. So that, weary of his life, he passed away at last in the fevered summer of a tropical city; dying with her name upon his lips. And his face was no more seen in the palm-shadowed streets; but the sun rose and sank as before.

And that vague phantom life, which sometimes lives and thinks in the tomb where the body moulders, lingered and thought within the narrow marble bed where they laid him with the pious hope — que en paz descanse!

Yet so weary of his life had the wanderer been that he could not even find the repose of the dead. And while the body sank into dust the phantom man found no rest in the darkness, and thought to himself, "I am even too weary to rest!"

There was a fissure in the wall of the tomb. And through it, and through the meshes of the web that a spider had spun across it, the dead looked, and saw the summer sky blazing like amethyst; the palms swaying in the breezes from the sea; the flowers in the shadows of the sepulchres; the opal fires of the horizon; the birds that sang, and the

[1] *Item*, October 21, 1880

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river that rolled its whispering waves between tall palms and vast-leaved plants to the heaving emerald of the Spanish Main. The voices of women and sounds of argentine laughter and of footsteps and of music, and of merriment, also came through the fissure in the wall of the tomb; sometimes also the noise of the swift feet of horses, and afar off the drowsy murmur made by the toiling heart of the city. So that the dead wished to live again; seeing that there was no rest in the tomb.

And the gold-born days died in golden fire;— and the moon whitened nightly the face of the earth; and the perfume of the summer passed away like a breath of incense; — but the dead in the sepulchre could not wholly die.

The voices of life entered his resting-place; the murmur of the world spoke to him in the darkness; the winds of the sea called to him through the crannies of the tomb. So that he could not rest. And yet for the dead there is no consolation of tears!

The stars in their silent courses looked down through the crannies of the tomb and passed on; the birds sang above him and flew to other lands; the lizards ran noiselessly above his bed of stone and as noiselessly departed; the spider at last ceased to renew her web of magical silk; the years came and went as before, but for the dead there was no rest!

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A DEAD LOVE

And it came to pass that after many tropical moons had waxed and waned, and the summer was come, with a presence sweet as a fair woman's — making the drowsy air odorous about her — that she whose name was uttered by his lips when the Shadow of Death fell upon him, came to that city of palms, and to the ancient place of burial, and even to the tomb that was nameless.

And he knew the whisper of her robes; and from the heart of the dead man a flower sprang and passed through the fissure in the wall of the tomb and blossomed before her and breathed out its soul in passionate sweetness.

But she, knowing it not, passed by; and the sound of her footsteps died away forever!

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AT THE CEMETERY[1]

"COME with me," he said, "that you may see the contrast between poverty and riches, between the great and the humble, even among the ranks of the dead; — for verily it hath been said that there are sermons in stones."

And I passed with him through the Egyptian gates, and beyond the pylons into the Alley of Cypresses; and he showed me the dwelling-place of the rich in the City of Eternal Sleep — the ponderous tombs of carven marble, the white angels that mourned in stone, the pale symbols of the urns, and the names inscribed upon tablets of granite in letters of gold. But I said to him: "These things interest me not; — these tombs are but traditions of the wealth once owned by men who dwell now where riches avail nothing and all rest together in the dust."

Then my friend laughed softly to himself, and taking my hand led me to a shadowy place where the trees bent under their drooping burdens of gray moss, and made waving silhouettes against the catacombed walls which girdle the cemetery. There the dead were numbered and piled away thickly upon the marble shelves, like those documents which none may destroy but which few care to read — the Archives of our Necropolis. And he

[1] *Item*, November 1, 1880. Hearn's own title.

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pointed to a marble tablet closing the aperture of one of the little compartments in the lowest range of the catacombs, almost level with the grass at our feet.

There was no inscription, no name, no wreath, no vase. But some hand had fashioned a tiny flower-bed in front of the tablet — a little garden about twelve inches in width and depth — and had hemmed it about with a border of pink-tinted sea-shells, and had covered the black mould over with white sand, through which the green leaves and buds of the baby plants sprouted up.

"Nothing but love could have created that," said my companion, as a shadow of tenderness passed over his face; — "and that sand has been brought here from a long distance, and from the shores of the sea."

Then I looked and remembered wastes that I had seen, where sand-waves shifted with a dry and rustling sound, where no life was and no leaf grew, where all was death and barrenness. And here were flowers blooming in the midst of sand! — the desert blossoming! — love living in the midst of death! And I saw the print of a hand, a child's hand — the tiny fingers that had made this poor little garden and smoothed the sand over the roots of the flowers.

"There is no name upon the tomb," said the voice of the friend who stood beside me; "yet why should there be?"

Why, indeed? I answered. Why should the world know the sweet secret of that child's love? Why

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should unsympathetic eyes read the legend of that grief? Is it not enough that those who loved the dead man know his place of rest, and come hither to whisper to him in his dreamless sleep?

I said *he;* for somehow or other the sight of that little garden created a strange fancy in my mind, a fancy concerning the dead. The shells and the sand were not the same as those usually used in the cemeteries. They had been brought from a great distance — from the moaning shores of the Mexican Gulf.

So that visions of a phantom sea arose before me; and mystic ships rocking in their agony upon shadowy waves; — and dreams of wild coasts where the weed-grown skeletons of wrecks lie buried in the ribbed sand.

And I thought — Perhaps this was a sailor and perhaps the loving ones who come at intervals to visit his place of rest waited and watched and wept for a ship that never came back.

But when the sea gave up its dead, they bore him to his native city, and laid him in this humble grave, and brought hither the sand that the waves had kissed, and the pink-eared shells within whose secret spirals the moan of ocean lingers forever.

And from time to time his child comes to plant a frail blossom, and smooth the sand with her tiny fingers, talking softly the while — perhaps only to herself — perhaps to that dead father who comes to her in dreams.

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"AÏDA" [1]

To Thebes, the giant city of a hundred gates, the city walled up to heaven, come the tidings of war from the south. Dark Ethiopia has risen against Egypt, the power "shadowing with wings" has invaded the kingdom of the Pharaohs, to rescue from captivity the beautiful Aïda, daughter of Amonasro, monarch of Ethiopia. Aïda is the slave of the enchanting Amneris, daughter of Pharaoh. Radames, chief among the great captains of Egypt, is beloved by Amneris; but he has looked upon the beauty of the slave-maiden, and told her in secret the story of his love.

And Radames, wandering through the vastness of Pharoah's palace, dreams of Aïda, and longs for power. Visions of grandeur tower before him like the colossi of Osiris in the temple courts; hopes and fears agitate his soul, as varying winds from desert or sea bend the crests of the dhoums to the four points of heaven. In fancy he finds himself seated at the king's right hand, clad with the robes of honor, and wearing the ring of might; second only to the most powerful of the Pharaohs. He lifts Aïda to share his greatness; he binds her brows with gold, and restores her to the land of her people. And even

[1] *Item*, January 17, 1881. Hearn's own title.

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as he dreams, Ramphis, the deep-voiced priest, draws nigh, bearing the tidings of war and of battle-thunder rolling up from the land "shadowing with wings," which is beyond the river of Ethiopia. The priest has consulted with the Veiled Goddess — Isis, whose awful face no man may see and live. And the Veiled One has chosen the great captain who shall lead the hosts of Egypt. "O happy man! — would that it were I!" cries Radames. But the priest utters not the name, and passes down the avenue of mighty pillars, and out into the day beyond.

Amneris, the daughter of Pharaoh, speaks words of love to Radames. His lips answer, but his heart is cold. And the subtle mind of the Egyptian maiden divines the fatal secret. Shall she hate her slave?

The priests summon the people of Egypt together; the will of the goddess is made manifest by the lips of Pharaoh himself. Radames shall lead the hosts of Egypt against the dark armies of Ethiopia. A roar of acclamation goes up to heaven. Aïda fears and weeps; it is against her beloved father, Amonasro, that her lover must lead the armies of the Nile. Radames is summoned to the mysterious halls of the Temple of Phthah: through infinitely extending rows of columns illumined by holy flames he is led to the inner sanctuary itself. The linen-mantled priest performs the measure of their ancient and

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symbolic dance; the warriors clad in consecrated armor; about his loins is girt a sacred sword; and the vast temple reëchoes through all its deeps of dimness the harmonies of the awful hymn to the Eternal Spirit of Fire.

The ceremony is consummated.

The monarch proclaims tremendous war. Thebes opens her hundred mouths of brass and vomits forth her nations of armies. The land shakes to the earthquake of the chariot-roll; numberless as ears of corn are the spear-blades of bronze; — the jaws of Egypt have opened to devour her enemies!

Aïda has confessed her love in agony; Amneris has falsely told her that her lover has fallen in battle. And the daughter of Pharaoh is strong and jealous.

As the white moon moves around the earth, as the stars circle in Egypt's rainless heaven, so circle the dancing-girls in voluptuous joy before the king — gauze-robed or clad only with jeweled girdles; — their limbs, supple as the serpents charmed by the serpent charmer, curve to the music of harpers harping upon fantastic harps. The earth quakes again; there is a sound in the distance as when a mighty tide approaches the land — a sound as of the thunder-chanting sea. The hosts of Egypt return. The chariots roar through the hundred gates of Thebes. Innumerable armies defile before the granite terraces of the Palace. Radames comes

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in the glory of his victory. Pharaoh descends from his throne to embrace him. "Ask what thou wilt, O Radames, even though it be the half of my kingdom!"

And Radames asks for the life of his captives. Amonasro is among them; and Aïda, beholding him, fears with an exceeding great fear. Yet none but she knows Amonasro; for he wears the garb of a soldier — none but she, and Radames. The priests cry for blood. But the king must keep his vow. The prisoners are set free. And Radames must wed the tall and comely Amneris, Pharaoh's only daughter.

It is night over Egypt. To Ramphis, the deep-voiced priest, tall Amneris must go. It is the eve of her nuptials. She must pray to the Veiled One, the mystic mother of love, to bless her happy union. Within the temple burn the holy lights; incense smoulders in the tripods of brass; solemn hymns resound through the vast-pillared sanctuary. Without, under the stars, Aïda glides like a shadow to meet her lover.

It is not her lover who comes. It is her father! "Aïda," mutters the deep but tender voice of Amonasro, "thou hast the daughter of Pharaoh in thy power! Radames loves thee! Wilt thou see again the blessed land of thy birth? — Wilt thou inhale the balm of our forests? — Wilt thou gaze

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upon our valleys and behold our temples of gold, and pray to the gods of thy fathers? Then it will only be needful for thee to learn what path the Egyptians will follow! Our people have risen in arms again! Radames loves thee! — he will tell thee all! What! dost thou hesitate? Refuse! — and they who died to free thee from captivity shall arise from the black gulf to curse thee! Refuse! — and the shade of thy mother will return from the tomb to curse thee! Refuse! — and I, thy father, shall disown thee and invoke upon thy head my everlasting curse!"

Radames comes! Amonasro, hiding in the shadow of the palms, hears all. Radames betrays his country to Aïda. "Save thyself! — fly with me!" she whispers to her lover. "Leave thy gods; we shall worship together in the temples of my country. The desert shall be our nuptial couch! — the silent stars the witness of our love. Let my black hair cover thee as a tent; my eyes sustain thee; my kisses console thee." And as she twines about him and he inhales the perfume of her lips and feels the beating of her heart, Radames forgets country and honor and faith and fame; and the fatal word is spoken. Napata! — Amonasro, from the shadows of the palm-trees, shouts the word in triumph! There is a clash of brazen blades; Radames is seized by priests and soldiers: Amonasro and his daughter fly under cover of the night.

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Vainly tall Amneris intercedes with the deep-voiced priest. Ramphis has spoken the word: "He shall die!" Vainly do the priests call upon Radames to defend himself against their terrible accusations. His lips are silent. He must die the death of traitors. They sentence him to living burial under the foundations of the temple, under the feet of the granite gods.

Under the feet of the deities they have made the tomb of Radames — a chasm wrought in a mountain of hewn granite. Above it the weird-faced gods with beards of basalt have sat for a thousand years. Their eyes of stone have beheld the courses of the stars change in heaven; generations have worshiped at their feet of granite. Rivers have changed their courses; dynasties have passed away since first they took their seats upon their thrones of mountain rock, and placed their giant hands upon their knees. Changeless as the granite hill from whose womb they were delivered by hieratic art, they watch over the face of Egypt, far-gazing through the pillars of the temple into the palm-shadowed valley beyond. Their will is inexorable as the hard rock of which their forms are wrought; their faces have neither pity nor mercy, because they are the faces of gods!

The priests close up the tomb; they chant their holy and awful hymn. Radames finds his Aïda

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beside him. She had concealed herself in the darkness that she might die in his arms.

The footsteps of the priests, the sacred hymn, die away. Alone in the darkness above, at the feet of the silent gods, there is a sound as of a woman's weeping. It is Amneris, the daughter of the king. Below in everlasting gloom the lovers are united at once in love and death. And Osiris, forever impassible, gazes into the infinite night with tearless eyes of stone.

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EL VÓMITO [1]

THE mother was a small and almost grotesque personage, with a somewhat mediæval face, oaken colored and long and full of Gothic angularity; only her eyes were young, full of vivacity and keen comprehension. The daughter was tall and slight and dark; a skin with the tint of Mexican gold; hair dead black and heavy with snaky ripples in it that made one think of Medusa; eyes large and of almost sinister brilliancy, heavily shadowed and steady as a falcon's; she had that lengthened grace of dancing figures on Greek vases, but on her face reigned the motionless beauty of bronze — never a smile or frown. The mother, a professed sorceress, who told the fortunes of veiled women by the light of a lamp burning before a skull, did not seem to me half so weird a creature as the daughter. The girl always made me think of Southey's witch, kept young by enchantment to charm Thalaba.

The house was a mysterious ruin: walls green with morbid vegetation of some fungous kind; humid rooms with rotting furniture of a luxurious and antiquated pattern; shrieking stairways; yielding and groaning floors; corridors forever dripping with a cold sweat; bats under the roof and rats

[1] *Item*, March 21, 1881.

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under the floor; snails moving up and down by night in wakes of phosphorescent slime; broken shutters, shattered glass, lockless doors, mysterious icy draughts, and elfish noises. Outside there was a kind of savage garden — torchon trees, vines bearing spotted and suspicious flowers, Spanish bayonets growing in broken urns, agaves, palmettoes, something that looked like green elephant's ears, a monstrous and ill-smelling species of lily with a phallic pistil, and many vegetable eccentricities I have never seen before. In a little stable-yard at the farther end were dyspeptic chickens, nostalgic ducks, and a most ancient and rheumatic horse, whose feet were always in water, and who made nightmare moanings through all the hours of darkness. There were also dogs that never barked and spectral cats that never had a kittenhood. Still the very ghastliness of the place had its fantastic charm for me. I remained; the drowsy Southern spring came to vitalize vines and lend a Japanese monstrosity to the tropical jungle under my balconied window. Unfamiliar and extraordinary odors floated up from the spotted flowers; and the snails crawled upstairs less frequently than before. Then a fierce and fevered summer!

It was late in the night when I was summoned to the Cuban's bedside: a night of such stifling and motionless heat as precedes a Gulf storm: the moon, magnified by the vapors, wore a spectral nimbus;

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the horizon pulsed with feverish lightnings. Its white flicker made shadowy the lamp-flame in the sick-room at intervals. I bade them close the windows. "El Vómito?" — already delirious; strange ravings; the fine dark face phantom-shadowed by death; singular and unfamiliar symptoms of pulsasion and temperature; extraordinary mental disturbance. Could this be Vómito? There was an odd odor in the room — ghostly, faint, but sufficiently perceptible to affect the memory: — I suddenly remembered the balcony overhanging the African wildness of the garden, the strange vines that clung with webbed feet to the ruined wall, and the peculiar, heavy, sickly, somnolent smell of the spotted blossoms! And as I leaned over the patient, I became aware of another perfume in the room, a perfume that impregnated the pillow — the odor of a woman's hair, the incense of a woman's youth mingling with the phantoms of the flowers, as ambrosia with venom, life with death, a breath from paradise with an exhalation from hell. From the bloodless lips of the sufferer, as from the mouth of one oppressed by some hideous dream, escaped the name of the witch's daughter. And suddenly the house shuddered through all its framework, as if under the weight of invisible blows: a mighty shaking of walls and windows — the storm knocking at the door.

I found myself alone with her; the moans of the dying could not be shut out; and the storm knocked

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louder and more loudly, demanding entrance. "*It is not the fever,*" I said. "I have lived in lands of tropical fever; your lips are even now humid with his kisses, and you have condemned him. My knowledge avails nothing against this infernal craft; but I know also that you must know the antidote which will baffle death; — this man shall not die! — I do not fear you! — I will denounce you! — He shall not die!"

For the first time I beheld her smile — the smile of secret strength that scorns opposition. Gleaming through the diaphanous whiteness of her loose robe, the lamplight wrought in silhouette the serpentine grace of her body like the figure of an Egyptian dancer in a mist of veils, and her splendid hair coiled about her like the viperine locks of a gorgon.

"La voluntad de mi madre!" she answered calmly. "You are too late! You shall not denounce us! Even could you do so, you could prove nothing. Your science, as you have said, is worth nothing here. Do you pity the fly that nourishes the spider? You shall do nothing so foolish, señor doctor, but you will certify that the stranger has died of the vómito. You do not know anything; you shall not know anything. You will be recompensed. We are rich." Without, the knocking increased, as if the thunder sought to enter: I, within, looked upon her face, and the face was passionless and motionless as the face of a woman of bronze.

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She had not spoken, but I felt her serpent litheness wound about me, her heart beating against my breast, her arms tightening about my neck, the perfume of her hair and of her youth and of her breath intoxicating me as an exhalation of enchantment. I could not speak; I could not resist; spellbound by a mingling of fascination and pleasure, witchcraft and passion, weakness and fear — and the storm awfully knocked without, as if summoning the stranger; and his moaning ceased.

Whence she came, the mother, I know not. She seemed to have risen from beneath:

"The doctor is conscientious! — he cares for his patient well. The stranger will need his excellent attention no more. The conscientious doctor has accepted his recompense; he will certify what we desire — will he not, hija mia?"

And the girl mocked me with her eyes, and laughed fiercely.

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THE IDYL OF A FRENCH SNUFF-BOX[1]

THE old Creole gentleman had forgotten his snuff-box — the snuff-box he had carried constantly with him for thirty years, and which he had purchased in Paris in days when Louisiana planters traveled through Europe leaving a wake of gold behind them, the trail of a tropical sunset of wealth. It was lying upon my table. Decidedly the old gentleman's memory was failing!

There was a dream of Theocritus wrought upon the ivory lid of the snuff-box, created by a hand so cunning that its work had withstood unscathed all the accidents of thirty odd years of careless usage — a slumbering dryad; an amorous faun!

The dryad was sleeping like a bacchante weary of love and wine, half-lying upon her side; half upon her bosom, pillowing her charming head upon one arm. Her bed was a mossy knoll; its front transformed by artistic magic into one of those Renaissance scroll-reliefs which are dreams of seashells; her ivory body moulded its nudity upon the curve of the knoll with antique grace.

Above her crouched the faun — a beautiful and mischievous faun. Lightly as a summer breeze, he lifted the robe she had flung over herself, and gazed upon her beauty. But around her polished thigh

[1] *Item*, April 5, 1881. Hearn's own title.

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clung a loving snake, the guardian of her sleep; and the snake raised its jeweled head and fixed upon the faun its glittering topaz eyes.

There the graven narrative closed its chapter of ivory: forever provokingly motionless the lithe limbs of the dryad and the serpent thigh-bracelet and the unhappily amorous faun holding the drapery rigid in his outstretched hand.

I fell asleep, still haunted by the unfinished idyl. The night filled the darkness with whispers and with dreams; and in a luminous cloud I beheld again the faun and the sleeping nymph and the serpent with topaz eyes coiled about her thigh.

Then the scene grew clear and large and warm; the figures moved and lived. It was an Arcadian vale, myrtle-shadowed, and sweet with the breath of summer winds. The brooks purled in the distance; bird voices twittered in the rustling laurels; the sun's liquid gold filtered through the leafy network above; the flowers swung their fragile censers and sweetened all the place. I saw the smooth breast of the faun rise and fall with his passionate panting; I fancied I could see his heart beat. And the serpent stirred its jeweled head with the topaz eyes.

Then the faun moved his lips in sound — a sound like the cooing of a dove in the coming of summer, and an answering coo rippled out from the myrtle trees. And softly as a flake of snow, a white-bosomed thing with bright, gentle eyes alighted

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beside the faun, and cooed and cooed again, and drew yet a little farther off and cooed once more.

Then the serpent looked upon the dove — which is sacred to Aphrodite — and glided from its smooth resting-place, as water glides between the fingers of a hunter who drinks from the hollow of his hand in hours of torrid heat and weariness. And the dove, still retreating, drew after her the guardian snake with topaz eyes.

Then with all her body kissed by the summer breeze, the nymph awoke, and her opening eyes looked into the eager eyes of the faun; and she started not, neither did she seem afraid. And stretching herself upon the soft moss after the refreshment of slumber, she flung her rounded arms back, and linked them about the neck of the faun; and they kissed each other, and the doves cooed in the myrtles.

And from afar off came yet a sweeter sound than the caressing voices of the doves — a long ripple of gentle melody, rising and falling like the sighing of an amorous zephyr, melancholy yet pleasing like the melancholy of love — Pan playing upon his pipe! —

There was a sudden knocking at the door:

"Pardon, mon jeune ami; j'oubliais ma tabatière! Ah! la voici! Je vous remercie!"

Alas! the vision never returned! The idyl remains a fragment! I cannot tell you what became of the dove and the serpent with topaz eyes.

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SPRING PHANTOMS [1]

THE moon, descending her staircase of clouds in one of the "Petits Poèmes en Prose," enters the chamber of a newborn child, and whispers into his dreams: "Thou shalt love all that loves me — the water that is formless and multiform, the vast green sea, the place where thou shalt never be, the woman thou shalt never know."

For those of us thus blessed or cursed at our birth, this is perhaps the special season of such dreams — of nostalgia, vague as the world-sickness, for the places where we shall never be; and fancies as delicate as arabesques of smoke concerning the woman we shall never know. There is a languor in the air; the winds sleep; the flowers exhale their souls in incense; near sounds seem distant, as if the sense of time and space were affected by hashish; the sunsets paint in the west pictures of phantom-gold, as of those islands at the mere aspect of whose beauty crews mutinied and burned their ships; plants that droop and cling assume a more feminine grace; and the minstrel of Southern woods mingles the sweet rippling of his mocking music with the moonlight.

There have been sailors who, flung by some kind storm-wave on the shore of a Pacific Eden, to be beloved for years by some woman dark but beautiful, subsequently returned by stealth to the turmoil

[1] *Item*, April 21, 1881. Hearn's own title.

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of civilization and labor, and vainly regretted, in the dust and roar and sunlessness of daily toil, the abandoned paradise they could never see again. Is it not such a feeling as this that haunts the mind in springtime; — a faint nostalgic longing for the place where we shall never be; — a vision made even more fairylike by such a vague dream of glory as enchanted those Spanish souls who sought, and never found El Dorado?

Each time the vision returns, is it not more enchanting than before, as a recurring dream of the night in which we behold places we can never see except through dream-haze, gilded by a phantom sun? It is sadder each time, this fancy; for it brings with it the memory of older apparitions, as of places visited in childhood, in that sweet dim time so long ago that its dreams and realities are mingled together in strange confusion, as clouds with waters.

Each year it comes to haunt us, like the vision of the Adelantado of the Seven Cities — the place where we shall never be — and each year there will be a weirder sweetness and a more fantastic glory about the vision. And perhaps in the hours of the last beating of the heart, before sinking into that abyss of changeless deeps above whose shadowless sleep no dreams move their impalpable wings, we shall see it once more, wrapped in strange luminosity, submerged in the orange radiance of a Pacific sunset — the place where we shall never be!

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And the Woman that we shall never know!

She is the daughter of mist and light — a phantom bride who becomes visible to us only during those magic hours when the moon enchants the world; she is the most feminine of all sweetly feminine things, the most complaisant, the least capricious. Hers is the fascination of the succubus without the red thirst of the vampire. She always wears the garb that most pleases us — when she wears any; always adopts the aspect of beauty most charming to us — blonde or swarthy, Greek or Egyptian, Nubian or Circassian. She fills the place of a thousand odalisques, owns all the arts of the harem of Solomon: all the loveliness we love retrospectively, all the charms we worship in the present, are combined in her. She comes as the dead come, who never speak; yet without speech she gratifies our voiceless caprice. Sometimes we foolishly fancy that we discover in some real, warm womanly personality, a trait or feature like unto hers; but time soon unmasks our error. We shall never see her in the harsh world of realities; for she is the creation of our own hearts, wrought Pygmalionwise, but of material too unsubstantial for even the power of a god to animate. Only the dreams of Brahma himself take substantial form: these are worlds and men and all their works, which shall pass away like smoke when the preserver ceases his slumber of a myriad million years.

She becomes more beautiful as we grow older —

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this phantom love, born of the mist of poor human dreams — so fair and faultless that her invisible presence makes us less reconciled to the frailties and foibles of real life. Perhaps she too has faults; but she has no faults for us except that of unsubstantiality. Involuntarily we acquire the unjust habit of judging real women by her spectral standard; and the real always suffer for the ideal. So that when the fancy of a home and children — smiling faces, comfort, and a woman's friendship, the idea of something real to love and be loved by — comes to the haunted man in hours of disgust with the world and weariness of its hollow mockeries — the Woman that he shall never know stands before him like a ghost with sweet sad eyes of warning — and he dare not!

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A KISS FANTASTICAL[1]

CURVES of cheek and throat, and shadow of loose hair — the dark flash of dark eyes under the silk of black lashes — a passing vision light as a dream of summer — the sweet temptations of seventeen years' grace — womanhood at its springtime, when the bud is bursting through the blossom — the patter of feet that hardly touch ground in their elastic movement — the light loose dress, moulding its softness upon the limbs beneath it, betraying much, suggesting the rest; an apparition seen only for a moment passing through the subdued light of a vine-shaded window, briefly as an object illuminated by lightning — yet such a moment may well be recorded by the guardian angels of men's lives.

"Croyez-vous ça?" suddenly demands a metallically sonorous voice at the other side of the table.

"Pardon! — qu'est ce que c'est?" asks the stranger, in the tone of one suddenly awakened, internally annoyed at being disturbed, yet anxious to appear deeply interested. They had been talking of Japan — and the traveler, suddenly regaining the clue of the conversation, spoke of a bath-house at Yokohama, and of strange things he had seen there, until the memory of the recent vision min-

[1] *Item*, June 8, 1881. Hearn's own title.

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gled fantastically with recollections of the Japanese bathing-house, and he sank into another reverie, leaving the untasted cup of black coffee before him to mingle its dying aroma with the odor of the cigarettes.

For there are living apparitions that affect men more deeply than fancied visits from the world of ghosts; — numbing respiration momentarily, making the blood to gather about the heart like a great weight, hushing the voice to a murmur, creating an indescribable oppression in the throat — until nature seeks relief in a strong sigh that fills the lungs with air again and cools for a brief moment the sudden fever of the veins. The vision may endure but an instant — seen under a gleam of sunshine, or through the antiquated gateway one passes from time to time on his way to the serious part of the city; yet that instant is enough to change the currents of the blood, and slacken the reins of the will, and make us deaf and blind and dumb for a time to the world of SOLID FACT. The whole being is momentarily absorbed, enslaved by a vague and voiceless desire to touch her, to kiss her, to bite her.

The lemon-gold blaze in the west faded out; the blue became purple; and in the purple the mighty arch of stars burst into illumination, with its myriad blossoms of fire white as a woman's milk.

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A Spanish officer improved a momentary lull in the conversation by touching a guitar, and all eyes turned toward the musician, who suddenly wrung from his instrument the nervous, passionate, semi-barbaric melody of a Spanish dance. For a moment he played to an absolutely motionless audience; the very waving of the fans ceased, the listeners held their breath. Then two figures glided through the vine-framed doorway, and took their seats. One was the Vision of a few hours before — a type of semi-tropical grace, with the bloom of Southern youth upon her dark skin. The other immediately impressed the stranger as the ugliest little Mexican woman he had ever seen in the course of a long and experienced life.

She was grotesque as a Chinese image of Buddha, no taller than a child of ten, but very broadly built. Her skin had the ochre tint of new copper; her forehead was large and disagreeably high; her nose flat; her cheek-bones very broad and prominent; her eyes small, deeply set, and gray as pearls; her mouth alone small, passionate, and pouting, with rather thick lips, relieved the coarseness of her face. Although so compactly built, she had no aspect of plumpness or fleshiness: — she had the physical air of one of those little Mexican fillies which are all nerve and sinew. Both women were in white; and the dress of the little Mexican was short enough to expose a very pretty foot and well-turned ankle.

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Another beautiful woman would scarcely have diverted the stranger's attention from the belle of the party that night; but that Mexican was so infernally ugly, and so devilishly comical, that he could not remove his eyes from her grotesque little face. He could not help remarking that her smile was pleasing if not pretty, and her teeth white as porcelain; that there was a strong, good-natured originality about her face, and that her uncouthness was only apparent, as she was the most accomplished dancer in the room. Even the belle's movements seemed heavy compared with hers; she appeared to dance as lightly as the hummingbird moves from blossom to blossom. By and by he found to his astonishment that this strange creature could fascinate without beauty and grace, and play coquette without art; also that her voice had pretty bird tones in it; likewise that the Spanish captain was very much interested in her, and determined to monopolize her as much as possible for the rest of the evening. And the stranger felt oddly annoyed thereat; and sought to console himself by the reflection that she was the most fantastically ugly little creature he had seen in his whole life. But for some mysterious reason consolation refused to come. "Well, I am going back to Honduras to-morrow," he thought — "and there thoughts of women will give me very little concern."

"I protest against this kissing," cried the roguish

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host in a loud voice, evidently referring to something that had just taken place in the embrasure of the farther window. "On fait venir l'eau dans la bouche! Monopoly is strictly prohibited. *Our* rights and feelings must be taken into just consideration." Frenzied applause followed. What difference did it make? — they were the world's Bohemians — here to-day, there to-morrow! — before another moonrise they would be scattered west and south; — the ladies ought to kiss them all for good luck.

So the kiss of farewell was given under the great gate, overhung by vine-tendrils drooping like a woman's hair love-loosened.

The beauty's lips shrank from the pressure of the stranger's; — it was a fruitless phantom sort of kiss. "Y yo, señor," cried the little Mexican, standing on tiptoe as she threw her arms about his neck. Everybody laughed except the recipient of the embrace. He had received an electric shock of passion which left him voiceless and speechless, and it seemed to him that his heart had ceased to beat.

Those carmine-edged lips seemed to have a special life of their own as of the gymnotus — as if crimsoned by something more lava-warm than young veins: they pressed upon his mouth with the motion of something that at once bites and sucks blood irresistibly but softly, like the great bats which absorb the life of sleepers in tropical forests;

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— there was something moist and cool and supple indescribable in their clinging touch, as of beautiful snaky things which, however firmly clasped, slip through the hand with boneless strength; — they could not themselves be kissed because they mesmerized and mastered the mouth presented to them; — their touch for the instant paralyzed the blood, but only to fill its motionless currents with unquenchable fires as strange as of a tropical volcano, so that the heart strove to rise from its bed to meet them, and all the life of the man seemed to have risen to his throat only to strangle there in its effort at self-release. A feeble description, indeed; but how can such a kiss be described?

. . . . . .

Six months later the stranger came back from Honduras, and deposited some small but heavy bags in the care of his old host. Then he called the old man aside, and talked long and earnestly and passionately, like one who makes a confession.

The landlord burst into a good-natured laugh, "Ah la drôle! — la vilaine petite drôle! So she made you crazy also. Mon cher, you are not the only one, pardieu! But the idea of returning here on account of one kiss, and then to be too late, after all! She is gone, my friend, gone. God knows where. Such women are birds of passage. You might seek the whole world and never find her; again, you might meet her when least expected. But you are too late. She married the guitarrista."

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THE BIRD AND THE GIRL [1]

SUDDENLY, from the heart of the magnolia, came a ripple of liquid notes, a delirium of melody, wilder than the passion of the nightingale, more intoxicating than the sweetness of the night — the mocking-bird calling to its mate.

"Ah, comme c'est coquet! — comme c'est doux!" — murmured the girl who stood by the gateway of the perfumed garden, holding up her mouth to be kissed with the simple confidence of a child.

"Not so sweet to me as your voice," he murmured, with lips close to her lips, and eyes looking into the liquid jet that shone through the silk of her black lashes.

The little Creole laughed a gentle little laugh of pleasure. "Have you birds like that in the West?" she asked.

"In cages," he said. "But very few. I have seen five hundred dollars paid for a fine singer. I wish you were a little mocking-bird!"

"Why?"

"Because I could take you along with me to-morrow."

"And sell me for five hundred dol—?" (A kiss smothered the mischievous question.)

"For shame!"

[1] *Item*, June 14, 1881.

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Jutting Balconies in the Creole City

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Printing Business in the Creole City

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"Won't you remember this night when you hear them sing in the cages? — poor little prisoners!"

"But we have none where I am now going. It is all wild out there; rough wooden houses and rough men! — no pets — not even a cat!"

"Then what would you do with a little bird in such a place? They would all laugh at you — would n't they?"

"No; I don't think so. Rough men love little pets."

"Little pets!"

"Like you, yes — too well!"

"Too well?"

"I did not mean to say that."

"But you did say it."

"I do not know what I say when I am looking into your eyes."

"Flatterer!"

The music and perfume of those hours came back to him in fragments of dreams all through the long voyage; — in slumber broken by the intervals of rapid travel on river and rail; the crash of loading under the flickering yellow of pine-fires; the steam song of boats chanting welcome or warning; voices of mate and roustabout; the roar of railroad depots; the rumble of baggage in air heavy with the oily breath of perspiring locomotives; the demands of conductors; the announcement of stations; — and at last the heavy jolting of the Western stage over

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rugged roads where the soil had a faint pink flush, and great coarse yellow flowers were growing.

So the days and weeks and months passed on; and the far Western village, with its single glaring street of white sand, blazed under the summer sun. At intervals came the United States mail-courier, booted and spurred and armed to the teeth, bearing with him always one small satiny note, stamped with the postmark of New Orleans, and faintly perfumed as by the ghost of a magnolia.

"Smells like a woman — that," the bronzed rider sometimes growled out as he delivered the delicate missive with an unusually pleasant flash in his great falcon eyes — eyes made fiercely keen by watching the horizon cut by the fantastic outline of Indian graves, the spiral flight of savage smoke far off which signals danger, and the spiral flight of vultures which signals death.

One day he came without a letter for the engineer — "She's forgotten you this week, Cap," he said in answer to the interrogating look, and rode away through the belt of woods, redolent of resinous gums and down the winding ways to the plain, where the eyeless buffalo skulls glimmered under the sun. Thus he came and thus departed through the rosiness of many a Western sunset, and brought no smile to the expectant face: "She's forgotten you again, Cap."

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And one tepid night (the 24th of August, 18—), from the spicy shadows of the woods there rang out a bird-voice with strange exotic tones: "Sweet, sweet, sweet!" — then cascades of dashing silver melody! — then long, liquid, passionate calls! — then a deep, rich ripple of caressing mellow notes, as of love languor oppressed that seeks to laugh. Men rose and went out under the moon to listen. There was something at once terribly and tenderly familiar to at least One in those sounds.

"What in Christ's name is that?" whispered a miner, as the melody quivered far up the white street.

"It is a mocking-bird," answered another who had lived in lands of palmetto and palm.

And as the engineer listened, there seemed to float to him the flower-odors of a sunnier land; — the Western hills faded as clouds fade out of the sky; and before him lay once more the fair streets of a far city, glimmering with the Mexican silver of Southern moonlight; — again he saw the rigging of masts making cobweb lines across the faces of stars and white steamers sleeping in ranks along the river's crescent-curve, and cottages vine-garlanded or banana-shadowed, and woods in their dreamy drapery of Spanish moss.

"Got something for you this time," said the United States mail-carrier, riding in weeks later with his bronzed face made lurid by the sanguine

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glow of sunset. He did not say "Cap" this time; neither did he smile. The envelope was larger than usual. The handwriting was the handwriting of a man. It contained only these words:

DEAR ——, Hortense is dead. It happened very suddenly on the night of the 24th. Come home at once.

S——

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THE TALE OF A FAN [1]

PAH! it is too devilishly hot to write anything about anything practical and serious — let us dream dreams.

. . . . . .

We picked up a little fan in a street-car the other day — a Japanese fabric, with bursts of blue sky upon it, and grotesque foliage sharply cut against a horizon of white paper, and wonderful clouds as pink as Love, and birds of form as unfamiliar as the extinct wonders of ornithology resurrected by Cuvieresque art. Where did those Japanese get their exquisite taste for color and tint-contrasts? — Is their sky so divinely blue? — Are their sunsets so virginally carnation? — Are the breasts of their maidens and the milky peaks of their mountains so white?

But the fairy colors were less strongly suggestive than something impalpable, invisible, indescribable, yet voluptuously enchanting which clung to the fan spirit-wise — a tender little scent — a mischievous perfume — a titillating, tantalizing aroma — an odor inspirational as of the sacred gums whose incense intoxicates the priests of oracles. Did you ever lay your hand upon a pillow covered with the living supple silk of a woman's hair? Well, the

[1] *Item*, July 1, 1881. Hearn's own title.

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intoxicating odor of that hair is something not to be forgotten: if we might try to imagine what the ambrosial odors of paradise are, we dare not compare them to anything else; — the odor of youth in its pliancy, flexibility, rounded softness, delicious coolness, dove-daintiness, delightful plasticity — all that suggests slenderness graceful as a Venetian wineglass, and suppleness as downy-soft as the necks of swans.

. . . . . .

Naturally that little aroma itself provoked fancies; — as we looked at the fan we could almost evoke the spirit of a hand and arm, of phantom ivory, the glimmer of a ghostly ring, the shimmer of spectral lace about the wrist; — but nothing more. Yet it seemed to us that even odors might be analyzed; that perhaps in some future age men might describe persons they had never seen by such individual aromas, just as in the Arabian tale one describes minutely a maimed camel and its burthen which he has never beheld.

There are blond and brunette odors; — the white rose is sweet, but the ruddy is sweeter; the perfume of pallid flowers may be potent, as that of the tuberose whose intensity sickens with surfeit of pleasures, but the odors of deeply tinted flowers are passionate and satiate not, quenching desire only to rekindle it.

There are human blossoms more delicious than any rose's heart nestling in pink. There is a sharp,

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tart, invigorating, penetrating, tropical sweetness in brunette perfumes; blond odors are either faint as those of a Chinese yellow rose, or fiercely ravishing as that of the white jessamine — so bewitching for the moment, but which few can endure all night in the sleeping-room, making the heart of the sleeper faint.

Now the odor of the fan was not a blond odor: — it was sharply sweet as new-mown hay in autumn, keenly pleasant as a clear breeze blowing over sea foam: — what were frankincense and spikenard and cinnamon and all the odors of the merchant compared with it? — What could have been compared with it, indeed, save the smell of the garments of the young Shulamitess or the whispering robes of the Queen of Sheba? And these were brunettes.

The strength of living perfumes evidences the comparative intensity of the life exhaling them. Strong sweet odors bespeak the vigor of youth in blossom. Intensity of life in the brunette is usually coincident with nervous activity and slender elegance. — Young, slenderly graceful, with dark eyes and hair, skin probably a Spanish olive! — did such an one lose a little Japanese fan in car No. —— of the C. C. R. R. during the slumberous heat of Wednesday morning?

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A LEGEND [1]

And it came to pass in those days that a plague fell upon mankind, slaying only the males and sparing the females for some mysterious reason.

So that there was only one man left alive upon the face of the earth.

And he was remarkably fair to behold and comely and vigorous as an elephant.

And feeling the difficulties of his position, the man fled away to the mountains, armed with a Winchester rifle, and lived among the wild beasts of the forest....

And the women pursued after him and surrounded the mountain; and prevailed upon the man, with subtle arguments and pleasant words, that he should deliver himself up into their hands.

And they made a treaty with him, that he should be defended from ill-usage and protected from fury and guarded about night and day with a guard.

And the guard was officered by women who were philosophers, and who cared for nothing in this world beyond that which is strictly scientific and matter of fact, so that they were above all the temptations of this world.

[1] *Item*, July 21, 1881. Hearn's own title.

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And the man was lodged in a palace, and nourished with all the dainties of the world, but was not suffered to go forth, or to show himself in the streets; forasmuch as he was guarded even as a queen bee is guarded in the hive.

Neither was he suffered to occupy his mind with grave questions or to read serious books or discourse of serious things or to peruse aught that had not been previously approved by the committee of scientific women.

For that which wearieth the brain affecteth the well-being of the body.

And all the day long he heard the pleasant plash of fountain waters and inhaled delicious perfumes, and the fairest women in the world stood before him under the supervision of the philosophers.

And a great army was organized to guard him; and great wars were fought with the women of other nations on his account, so that nine millions and more of strong young women were killed.

But he was not permitted to know any of these things, lest it might trouble his mind; nor was he suffered to hear or behold aught that can be unpleasant to mortal ears.

He was permitted only to gaze upon beautiful things — beautiful flowers and fair women, and matchless statues and marvelous pictures, and graven gems and magical vases, and cunningly devised work of goldsmiths and silversmiths. He was only suffered the music created by the fingers of

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the greatest musicians and by the throats of the most bewitching of singers.

And once a year out of every ten thousand women in the world the fairest one and the most complete in all things was chosen; and of those chosen ones the fairest and most perfect were again chosen; and out of these again the committee of philosophers selected one thousand; and out of these thousand the man chose three hundred.

For he was the only man in the whole world; and the committee of philosophers ordained that he should be permitted to remain entirely alone for sixty-five days in the year, lest he might be, as it were, talked to death.

At first the man fell occasionally in love and felt unhappy; but as the committee of philosophers always sent unto him women more beautiful and more adorable than any he had seen before, he soon became reconciled to his lot.

And instead of committing the folly of loving one woman in particular, he learned to love all women in general.

And during fifty years he lived such a life as even the angels might envy.

And before he died he had 15,273 children, and 91,638 grandchildren.

And the children were brought up by the nation, and permitted to do nothing except to perfect their minds and bodies.

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And in the third generation the descendants of the man had increased even to two millions of males, not including females, who were indeed few, so great was the universal desire for males.

And in the tenth generation there were even as many males as females.

And the world was regenerated.

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THE GYPSY'S STORY [1]

THE summer's day had been buried in Charlemagne splendors of purple and gold; the Spanish sable of the night glittered with its jewel-belt of stars. The young moon had not yet lifted the silver horns of her Moslem standard in the far east. We were sailing over lukewarm waves, rising and falling softly as the breast of a sleeper; winds from the south bore to us a drowsy perfume of lemon-blossoms; and the yellow lights among the citron trees seemed, as we rocked upon the long swell, like the stars of Joseph's dream doing obeisance. Far beyond them a giant pharos glared at us with its single Cyclopean eye of bloodshot fire, dyeing the face of the pilot crimson as a pomegranate. At intervals the sea amorously lipped the smooth flanks of the vessel with a sharp sound; and ghostly fires played about our prow. Seated upon a coil of rope a guitarrista sang, improvising as he sang, one of those sweetly monotonous ballads which the Andalusian gypsies term solearíyas. Even now the rich tones of that solitary voice vibrate in our memory, almost as on that perfumed sea, under the light of summer stars:

Sera,
Para mi er mayo delirio
Berte y no poerte habla.

[1] *Item*, August 18, 1881.

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Gacho,
Gacho que no hab ya motas
Es un barco sin timon.
Por ti,
Las horitas e la noche
Me las paso sin dormi.
Sereno,
No de oste la boz tan arta
Que quieo dormi y no pueo.
Marina,
Con que te lavas la cara
Que la tienes tan dibina?

Why he told me his story I know not: I know only that our hearts understood each other.

"Of my mother," he said, "I knew little when a child; I only remember her in memories vague as dreams, and perhaps in dreams also. For there are years of our childhood so mingled with dreams that we cannot discern through memory the shadow from the substance. But in those times I was forever haunted by a voice that spoke a tongue only familiar to me in after years, and by a face I do not ever remember to have kissed.

"A clear, dark face, strong and delicate, with sharp crescent brows and singularly large eyes, liquidly black, bending over me in my sleep — the face of a tall woman. There was something savage even in the tenderness of the great luminous eyes — such a look as the hunter finds in the eyes of fierce birds when he climbs to their nests above the

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clouds; and this dark dream-face filled me with strange love and fear. The hair, flowing back from her temples in long ripples of jet, was confined by a broad silver comb curved and gleaming like a new moon.

"And at last when these dreams came upon me, and the half-fierce, loving eyes looked upon me in the night, I would awake and go out under the stars and sob.

"A vast unrest possessed me; a new heat throbbed in my veins, and I heard forever flute-tones of a strange voice, speaking in an unknown tongue; but far, far off, like the sounds of words broken and borne away in fragments by some wandering wind.

"Ocean breezes sang in my ears the song of waves — of waves chanting the deep hymn that no musician can learn — the mystic hymn whereof no human ear may ever discern the words — the magical hymn that is older than the world, and weirder than the moon.

"The winds of the woods bore me odors of tears of spicy gums and the sounds of bird-voices sweeter than the plaint of running water, and whispers of shaking shadows, and the refrain of that mighty harp-song which the pines sing, and the vaporous souls of flowers, and the mysteries of succubus-vines that strangle the oaks with love.

"Winds also, piercing and cold as Northern eyes, came to me from the abysses of the rocks, and from peaks whose ermine of snow has never since

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the being of the world felt the pressure of a bird's foot; and they sang Runic chants of mountain freedom, where the lightnings cross their flickerings. And with these winds came also shadows of birds, far circling above me, with eyes fierce and beautiful as the eyes of my dream.

"So that a great envy came upon me of the winds and waves and birds that circle forever with the eternal circling of the world. Nightly the large eyes, half fierce, half tender, glimmered through my sleep: phantom winds called to me, and shadowy seas chanted through their foam-flecked lips runes weird as the Runes of Odin.

"And I hated cities with the hatred of the camel — the camel that sobs and moans on beholding afar, on the yellow rim of the desert, the corpse-white finger of a minaret pointing to the dome of Mahomet's heaven.

"Also I hated the rumble of traffic and the roar of the race for gold; the shadows of palaces on burning streets; the sound of toiling feet; the black breath of towered chimneys; and the vast machines, forever laboring with sinews of brass, and panting with heart of steam and steel.

"Only loved I the eyes of night and the women eyes that haunted me — the silence of rolling plains, the whispers of untrodden woods, the shadows of flying birds and fleeting clouds, the heaving emerald

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of waves, the silver lamentation of brooks, the thunder roll of that mighty hymn of hexameters which the ocean must eternally sing to the stars.

"Once, and once only, did I speak to my father of the dark and beautiful dream that floated to me on the misty waves of sleep. Once, and once only; for I beheld his face grow whiter than the face of Death.

"Encompassed about by wealth and pleasure, I still felt like a bird in a cage of gold. Books I loved only because they taught me mysteries of sky and sea — the alchemy of suns, the magic of seasons, the marvels of lands to which we long forever to sail, yet may never see. But I loved wild rides by night, and long wrestling with waves silver-kissed by the moon, and the musky breath of woods, where wild doves wandered from shadow to shadow, cooing love. And the strange beauty of the falcon face, that haunted me forever, chilled my heart to the sun-haired maidens who sought our home, fair like tall idols of ivory and gold.

"Often, in the first pinkness of dawn, I rose from a restless sleep to look upon a mirror; thirsting to find in my own eyes some dark kindred with the eyes of my dreams; and often I felt in my veins the blood of a strange race, not my father's.

"I saw birds flying to the perfumed South; I watched the sea gulls seeking warmer coasts;

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I cursed the hawks for their freedom — I cursed the riches that were the price of my bondage to civilization, the pleasures that were the guerdon of my isolation among a people not my own.

— "'O that I were a cloud,' I cried, 'to drift forever with the hollow wind! — O that I were a wave to pass from ocean to ocean, and chant my freedom in foam upon the rocks of a thousand coasts! — O that I might live even as the eagle, who may look into the face of the everlasting sun!'

"So the summer of my life came upon me, with a madness of longing for freedom — a freedom as of winds and waves and birds — and a vague love for that unknown people whose wild blood made fever in my veins,— until one starless night I fled my home forever.

"I slumbered in the woods at last; the birds were singing in the emerald shadows above when I awoke. A tall girl, lithe as a palm, swarthy as Egypt, was gazing upon me. My heart almost ceased to beat. I beheld in the wild beauty of her dark face as it were the shadow of the face that had haunted me; and in the midnight of her eyes the eyes of my dream. Circles of thin gold were in her ears; — her brown arms and feet were bare. She smiled not; but, keeping her great wild eyes fixed upon mine, addressed me in a strange tongue. Strange as India — yet not all strange to me; for at the sound of its savage syllables dusky chambers of

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memory long unvisited reopened their doors and revealed forgotten things. The tongue was the tongue spoken to me in dreams through all those restless years. And she, perceiving that I understood, although I spoke not, pointed to far tents beyond the trees, and ascending spirals of lazy smoke.

"'Whithersoever we go, thou shalt also go,' she murmured. 'Thou art of our people; the blood that flows in thy veins is also mine. We have long waited and watched for thee, summer by summer, in those months when the great longing comes upon us all. For thy mother was of my people; and thou who hast sucked her breasts mayst not live with the pale children of another race. The heaven is our tent; the birds guide our footsteps south and north; the stars lead us to the east and west. My people have sought word of thee even while wandering in lands of sunrise. Our blood is stronger than wine; our kindred dearer than gold. Thou wilt leave riches, pleasures, honors, and the life of cities for thy heart's sake; and I will be thy sister.'

"And I, having kissed her, followed her to the tents of her people — my people — the world wanderers of the most ancient East."

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THE ONE PILL-BOX [1]

LIKE Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, the sun seemed to blaze with sevenfold heat; the sky glowed like steel in the process of blistering; a haze yellow as the radiance above a crucible gilded the streets; the great plants swooned in the garden — fainting flowers laid their heads on the dry clay; the winds were dead; the Yellow Plague filled the city with invisible exhalations of death. A silence as of cemeteries weighed down upon the place; commerce slept a wasting slumber; the iron muscles and brazen bones of wealth machinery relaxed, and lungs of steel ceased their panting; the ships had spread their white wings and flown; the wharves were desolate; the cotton-presses ceased their mighty mastication, and no longer uttered their titanic sighs.

The English mill-master had remained at his post, with the obstinate courage of his race, until stricken down. There was a sound in his ears as of rushing waters; darkness before his eyes: the whispering of the nurses, the orders of the physicians, the tinkling of glasses and spoons, the bubbling of medicine poured out, the sound of doors softly opened and closed, and of visits made

[1] *Item*, October 12, 1881.

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on tiptoe, he no longer heard or remembered. The last object his eyes had rested upon was a tiny white-and-red pill-box, lying on the little table beside the bed.

The past came to him in shadowy pictures between dark intervals of half-conscious suffering — of such violent pain in thighs and loins as he remembered to have felt long years before after some frightful fall from a broken scaffolding. The sound in his ears of rushing water gradually sharpened into a keener sound — like the hum of machinery, like the purring of revolving saws, gnawing their meal of odorous wood with invisibly rapid teeth. Odors of cypress and pine, walnut and oak, seemed to float to his nostrils — with sounds of planing and beveling, hammering and polishing, subdued laughter of workmen, loud orders, hurrying feet, and above all the sharp, trilling purr of the hungry saws, and the shaking rumble of the hundred-handed engines.

He was again in the little office, fresh with odors of resinous woods — seated at the tall desk whose thin legs trembled with the palpitation of the engine's heart. It seemed to him there was a vast press of work to be done — enormous efforts to be made — intricate contracts to be unknotted — huge estimates to be made out — agonizing errors to be remedied — frightful miscalculations to be corrected — a world of anxious faces impatiently

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watching him. Figures and diagrams swam before his eyes — plans of façades — mathematical calculations for stairways — difficult angles of roofs — puzzling arrangements of corridors. The drawings seemed to vary their shape with fantastic spitefulness; squares lengthened into parallelograms and distorted themselves into rhomboids — circles mockingly formed themselves into ciphers — triangles became superimposed, like the necromantic six-pointed star. Then numerals mingled with the drawings — columns of magical figures which could never be added up, because they seemed to lengthen themselves at will with serpent elasticity — a mad procession of confused notes in addition and subtraction, in division and multiplication, danced before him. And the world of anxious faces watched yet more impatiently.

All was dark again; the merciless pain in loins and thighs had returned with sharp consciousness of the fever, and the insufferable heat and skull-splitting headache — heavy blankets and miserable helplessness — and the recollection of the very, very small pill-box on the table. Then it seemed to him there were other pill-boxes — three! nine! twenty-seven! eight-one! one hundred and sixty-two! one hundred and sixty-two very small pill-boxes.

He seemed to be wandering in a cemetery, under blazing sunlight and in a blinding glare of white-

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washed tombs, whose skeletons of brick were left bare in leprous patches by the falling away of the plastering. And, wandering, he came to a deep wall, catacombed from base to summit with the resting-places of ten thousand dead; and there was one empty place — one black void — inscribed with a name strangely like his own. And a great weariness and faintness came upon him; and the pains, returning, carried back his thoughts to the warmth and dimness of the sick-room.

It seemed to him that this could not be death — he was too weary even to die! But they would put him into the hollow void in the wall! — they might: he would not resist, he felt no fear. He could rest there very well even for a hundred years. He had a gimlet somewhere! — they would let him take it with him; — he could bore a tiny little hole in the wall so that a thread of sunlight would creep into his resting-place every day, and he could hear the voices of the world about him. Yet perhaps he should never be able to leave that dark damp place again! — It was very possible; seeing that he was so tired. And there was so much to be arranged first: there were estimates and plans and contracts; and nobody else could make them out; and everything would be left in such confusion! And perhaps he might not even be able to think in a little while; all the knowledge he had stored up would be lost; nobody could think much or say much after having

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been buried. And he thought again of the pill-boxes — one hundred and sixty-two very small pill-boxes. No; there were exactly three hundred and sixty-six! Perhaps that was because it was leap year.

Everything must be arranged at once! — at once! The pill-boxes would do; he could breathe his thoughts into them and close them tightly — recollections of estimates, corrections of plans, directions to the stair-builders, understanding with contractors, orders to the lumber dealers, instructions to Texan and Mississippi agents, answers to anxious architects, messages to the senior partner, explanations to the firm of X and W. Then it seemed to him that each little box received its deposit of memories, and became light as flame, buoyant as a bubble; — rising in the air to float halfway between floor and ceiling. A great anxiety suddenly came upon him; — the windows were all open, and the opening of the door might cause a current. All these little thoughts would float away! — yet he could not rise to lock the door! The boxes were all there, floating above him light as motes in a sunbeam: — there were so many now that he could not count them! If the nurse would only stay away!... Then all became dark again — a darkness as of solid ebony, heavy, crushing, black, blank, universal....

All lost! Brutally the door opened and closed again with a cruel clap of thunder.... Yellow light-

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nings played circling before his eyes.... The pill-boxes were gone! But was not that the face of the doctor, anxious and kindly? The burning day was dead; the sick man turned his eyes to the open windows, and beheld the fathomless purple of the night, and the milky blossoms of the stars. And he strove to speak, but could not! The light of a shaded lamp falling upon the table illuminated a tiny object, blood-scarlet by day, carmine under the saffron artificial light. *There was only one pill-box.*

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A RIVER REVERIE [1]

An old Western river port, lying in a wrinkle of the hills — a sharp slope down to the yellow water, glowing under the sun like molten bronze — a broken hollow square of buildings framing it in, whose basements had been made green by the lipping of water during inundations periodical as the rising of the Nile — a cannonade-rumble of drays over the boulders, and muffled-drum thumping of cotton bales — white signs black-lettered with names of steamboat companies, and the green lattice-work of saloon doors flanked by empty kegs — above, church spires cutting the blue — below, on the slope, hogsheads, bales, drays, cases, boxes, barrels, kegs, mules, wagons, policemen, loungers, and roustabouts, whose apparel is at once as picturesque, as ragged, and as colorless as the fronts of their favorite haunts on the water-front. Westward the purple of softly-rolling hills beyond the flood, through a diaphanous veil of golden haze — a marshaled array of white boats with arabesque lightness of painted woodwork, and a long and irregular line of smoking chimneys. The scene never varied save with the varying tints of weather and season. Sometimes the hills were gray through an atmosphere of rain — sometimes they vanished

[1] *Times-Democrat*, May 2, 1882.

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altogether in an autumn fog; but the port never changed. And in summer or spring, at the foot of the iron stairway leading up to a steamboat agency in the great middle building facing the river, there was a folding stool — which no one ever tried to steal — which even the most hardened wharf thieves respected — and on that stool, at the same hour every day, a pleasant-faced old man with a very long white beard used to sit. If you asked anybody who it was, the invariable reply was: "Oh! that's old Captain ——; used to be in the New Orleans trade; — had to give up the river on account of rheumatism; — comes down every day to look at things."

Wonder whether the old captain still sits there of bright afternoons, to watch the returning steamers panting with their mighty run from the Far South — or whether he has sailed away upon that other river, silent and colorless as winter's fog, to that vast and shadowy port where much ghostly freight is discharged from vessels that never return? He haunts us sometimes — even as he must have been haunted by the ghosts of dead years.

When some great white boat came in, uttering its long, wild cry of joy after its giant race of eighteen hundred miles, to be reëchoed by the hundred voices of the rolling hills — surely the old man must have dreamed upon his folding stool of marvelous nights upon the Mississippi — nights filled with the perfume of orange blossoms under a milky

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palpitation of stars in amethystine sky, and witchery of tropical moonlight.

The romance of river-life is not like the romance of the sea — that romance memory evokes for us in the midst of the city by the simple exhalations of an asphalt pavement under the sun — divine saltiness, celestial freshness, the wild joy of wind-kissed waves, the hum of rigging and crackling of cordage, the rocking as of a mighty cradle. But it is perhaps sweeter. There is no perceptible motion of the river vessel; it is like the movement of a balloon, so steady that not we but the world only seems to move. Under the stars there seems to unroll its endlessness like an immeasurable ribbon of silver-purple. There is a noiseless ripple in it, as of watered silk. There is a heavy, sweet smell of nature, of luxuriant verdure; the feminine outlines of the hills, dotted with the chrome-yellow of window-lights, are blue-black; the vast arch of stars blossoms overhead; there is no sound but the colossal breathing of the laboring engines; the stream widens; the banks lessen; the heavens seem to grow deeper, the stars whiter, the blue bluer. Under the night it is all a blue world, as in a planet illuminated by a colored sun. The calls of the passing boats, sonorous as the music of vast silver trumpets, ring out clear but echoless; — there are no hills to give ghostly answer. Days are born in gold and die in rose-color; and the stream widens, widens, broadens toward the eternity of the sea under the eternity

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of the sky. We sail out of Northern frosts into Southern lukewarmness, into the luxuriant and somnolent smell of magnolias and lemon-blossoms— the sugar-country exhales its incense of welcome. And the giant crescent of lights, the stream-song of joyous boats, the world of chimneys, the forests of spars, the burst of morning glory over New Orleans viewed from the deck of a pilot-house. . . .

These may never be wholly forgotten; after the lapse of fifty years in some dusty and dreary inland city, an odor, an echo, a printed name may resurrect their recollection, fresh as one of those Gulf winds that leave sweet odors after them, like coquettish women, like Talmudic angels.

So that we beheld all these things yesterday and heard all these dead voices once more; saw the old Western port with its water-beslimed warehouses, and the Kentucky hills beyond the river, and the old captain on his folding stool, gazing wistfully at the boats; so that we heard once more the steam whistles of vessels that have long ceased to be, or that, changed into floating wharves, rise and fall with the flood, like corpses.

And all because there came an illustrious visitor to us, who reminded us of all these things; having once himself turned the pilot's wheel, through weird starlight or magical moonshine, gray rain or ghostly fog, golden sun or purple light — down the great river from Northern frosts to tepid Southern winds — and up the mighty stream into the misty North again.

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To-day his name is a household word in the English-speaking world; his thoughts have been translated into other tongues; his written wit creates mirth at once in Paris salons and in New Zealand homes. Fortune has also extended to him her stairway of gold; and he has hobnobbed much with the great ones of the world. But there is still something of the pilot's cheery manner in his greeting, and the keenness of the pilot's glance in his eyes, and a looking out and afar off, as of the man who of old was wont to peer into the darkness of starless nights, with the care of a hundred lives on his hands.

He has seen many strange cities since that day — sailed upon many seas — studied many peoples — written many wonderful books.

Yet, now that he is in New Orleans again, one cannot help wondering whether his heart does not sometimes prompt him to go to the river, like that old captain of the far Northwestern port, to watch the white boats panting at the wharves, and listen to their cries of welcome or farewell, and dream of nights beautiful, silver-blue, and silent — and the great Southern moon peering into a pilot-house.

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"HIS HEART IS OLD" [1]

CHRYSTOBLEPHAROS — Elikoblepharos — eyelids grace-kissed — the eyes of Leucothea — the dreaming marble head of the Capitoline Museum — the face of the girl-nurse of the wine-god, with a spray of wine-leaves filleting her sweet hair — that inexpressible, inexplicable, petrified dream of loveliness, which well enables us to comprehend old monkish tales regarding the infernal powers of enchantment possessed by the antique statues of those gods who Tertullian affirmed were demons. For in howsoever thoughtless a mood one may be when he first visits the archæological shrine in which the holiness of antique beauty reposes, the first glorious view of such a marble miracle compels the heart to slacken its motion in the awful wonder of that moment. One breathes low, as in sacred fear lest the vision might dissolve into nothingness — as though the witchery might be broken were living breath to touch with its warm moisture that wonderful marble cheek. Vainly may you strive to solve the secret of this magical art; the exquisite mystery is divine — human eye may never pierce it; one dare not laugh, dare not speak in its presence — that beauty imposes silence by its very sweetness; one may pray

[1] *Times-Democrat*, May 7, 1882.

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voicelessly, one does not smile in presence of the Superhuman. And when hours of mute marveling have passed, the wonder seems even newer than before. Shall we wonder that early Christian zealots should have dashed these miracles to pieces, maddened by the silent glamour of beauty that defied analysis and seemed, indeed, a creation of the Master-Magician himself?

And the Centauress, in cameo, kneeling to suckle her little one; — the supple nudity of exquisite ephebi turning in eternal dance about the circumference of wondrous vases; — gentle Psyche, butterfly-winged, weeping on a graven carnelian; — river-deities in relief eternally watching the noiseless flow of marble waves from urns that gurgle not; — joyous Tritons with knotty backs and seaweed twined among their locks; — luxurious symposia in sculpture, such as might have well suggested the Oriental fancy of petrified cities, with their innumerable pleasure-seekers suddenly turned to stone; — splendid processions of maidens to the shrine of the Maiden-Goddess, and Bacchantes leading tame panthers in the escort of the Rosy God: all these and countless other visions of the dead Greek world still haunted me, as I laid aside the beautiful and quaint volume of archæological learning that inspired them — bound in old fashion, and bearing the imprint of a firm that had ceased to exist ere the close of the French Revolution — a Rococo Winkelmann. And still they circled about me, with

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the last smoke-wreaths of the last evening pipe, on the moonlight balcony, among the shadows.

Then as I dreamed the beautiful dead world seemed to live again, in a luminous haze, in an Elysian glow. The processions of stone awoke from their sleep of two thousand years, and moved and chanted; — marble dreams became lithe flesh; — the phantom Arcadia was peopled with shapes of unclad beauty; — I saw eyelids as of Leucothea palpitating under the kisses of the Charities — the incarnate loveliness superhuman of a thousand god-like beings, known to us only by their shadows in stone; — and the efflorescent youth of that vanished nation, whose idols were Beauty and Joy — who laughed much and never wept — whose perfect faces were never clouded by the shadow of a grief, nor furrowed by the agony of thought, nor wrinkled by the bitterness of tears.

I found myself in the honeyed heart of that world, where all was youth and joy — where the very air seemed to thrill with new happiness in a paradise newly created — where innumerable flowers, of genera unknown in these later years, filled the valley with amorous odor of spring. But I sat among them with the thoughts of the Nineteenth Century, and the heart of the Nineteenth Century, and the garb of the Nineteenth Century, which is black as a garb of mourning for the dead. And they drew about me, seeing that I laughed not at all, nor smiled, nor spoke;

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and low-whispering to one another, they murmured with a silky murmur as of summer winds:

"His heart is old!"

And I pondered the words of the Ecclesiast: "Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.... It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; and the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth." But I answered nothing; and they spake again, whispering, "*His heart is old!*" And one with sweet and silky-lidded eyes, lifted her voice and spake:

"O thou dreamer, wherefore evoke us, wherefore mourn us — seeing that there is no more joy in the world?

"Ours was a world of light and of laughter and of flowers, of loveliness and of love. Thine is smoke-darkened and sombre; there is no beauty unveiled; and men have forgotten how to laugh.

"Ye have increased wisdom unto sorrow, and sorrow unto infinite despair; — for there is now no Elysium — the vault of heaven has sunk back into immensity, and dissolved itself into nothingness; the boundaries of earth are set, and the earth itself resolved into a grain of dust, whirling in the vast white ring of innumerable suns and countless revolving worlds. Yet we were happier, believing the blossoming of stars to be only drops of milk from the perfect breast of a goddess.

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"Nymphs haunted our springs; dryads slumbered in the waving shadows of our trees; zephyrs ethereal rode upon our summer winds; and great Pan played upon his pipe in the emerald gloom of our summer woods. Ye men of to-day have analyzed all substances, decomposed all elements, to discover the Undiscoverable, and ye have found it not. But in searching for the unsearchable, ye have lost joy.

"We loved the beauty of youth — the litheness of young limbs — the rosy dawn of maturity — the bloom of downy cheeks — the sweetness of eyes sweetened by vague desires of life's spring — the marvelous thrill of a first kiss — the hunger of love which had only to announce itself to be appeased — and the glory of strength. But ye have sought the secret of the Universal life in charnel-houses — dismembering rottenness itself and prying open the jaws of Death to view the awful emptiness therein. Learning only enough to appall you, ye have found that science can teach you less of beauty than our forgotten gymnasiums; but in the mean time, ye have forgotten how to love.

"We gave to the bodies of our well-beloved the holy purification of fire; ye confide them to the flesh-eating earth, filling your cities with skeletons. For us Death was bodiless and terrible; for you she is visible and yet welcome; — for so weary have men become of life that her blackness seems to them beauty,— the beauty of a mistress, the universal Pasiphila, who alone can give consolation to hearts

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weary of life. So that ye have even forgotten how to die!

"And thou, O dreamer, thou knowest that there was no beginning and that there shall be no end; but thou dost also know that the dust beneath thy feet has lived and loved, that all which now lives once lived not, and that what is now lifeless will live again; — thou knowest that the substance of the sweetest lips has passed through myriad million transformations, that the light of the sweetest eyes will still pass through innumerable changes after the fires of the stars have burnt themselves out. In seeking the All-Soul, thou hast found it in thyself, and hast elevated thyself to deity, yet for thee are vows vain and oracles dumb. Hope is extinguished in everlasting night; thou mayst not claim even the consolation of prayer, for thou canst not pray to thyself. Like the Mephistopheles of thy poet, O dreamer of the Nineteenth Century, thou mayst sit between the Sphinx of the Past and the Sphinx of the Future, and question them, and open their lips of granite, and answer their mocking riddles. But thou mayst not forget how to weep, even though thy heart grow old."...

But I could not weep! — And the phantoms, marveling, murmured with a strange murmur — "The heart of Medusa!"

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MDCCCLIII [1]

SOMEBODY I knew was there — a woman. . . .

Heat, motionless and ponderous, as in some feverish colonial city rising from the venomous swamps of the Ivory Coast. The sky-blue seemed to bleach from the horizon's furnace edges — even sounds were muffled and blunted by the heaviness of that air — vaguely, as to a dozing brain, came the passing reverberation of footsteps; — the river-current was noiseless and thick and lazy, like wax-made fluid. . . . Such were the days — and each day offered up a triple hecatomb to death — and the faces of all the dead were yellow as flame. . . .

Never a drop of rain: — the thin clouds which made themselves visible of evenings only, flocking about the dying fires of the west, seemed to dwellers in the city troops of ghosts departing with the day, as in the fantastic myths of the South Pacific.

. . . I passed the outer iron gate — the warm seashells strewing the way broke under my feet with faint saline odors in the hot air: — I heard the iron tongue of a bell utter ONE, with the sinister vibration of a knell — signaling the eternal extinction of a life. Seven and seventy times that iron tongue had uttered its grim monosyllable since the last setting

[1] *Times-Democrat*, May 21, 1882. Hearn's own title.

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of the sun. The grizzled watcher of the inner gate extended his pallid palm for that eleemosynary contribution exacted from all visitors; — and it seemed to me that I beheld the gray Ferryman of Shadows himself, silently awaiting his obolus from me, also a Shadow. And as I glided into the world of agony beyond, the dead-bell moved its iron tongue again — once. . . .

Vast bare gleaming corridors into which many doors exhaled odors of medicines and moans and sound of light footsteps hurrying — then I stood a moment all alone — a long moment that I repass sometimes in dreams. (Only that in dreams of the past there are no sounds — the dead are dumb; and the fondest may not retain the evanescent memory of a voice.) Then suddenly approached a swift step — so light, so light that it seemed the coming of a ghost; and I saw a slight figure black-robed from neck to feet, the fantastically winged cap of a Sister, and beneath the white cap a dark and beautiful face with very black eyes. Even then the iron bell spake again — once! I muttered — nay, I whispered, all fearful with the fearfulness of that place, the name of a ward and — the name of a Woman.

"Friend, friend! what do you want here?" murmured the Sister, who saw that the visitor was a stranger. Hers was the first voice I had heard in that place of death, and it seemed so sweet and clear — a musical vibration of youth and hope!

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And I answered, this time audibly. "You are not afraid?" she asked. "Come!"

Taking my hand, she led me thither — through spaces of sunlight and shadow, through broad and narrow ways, and between rows of beds white like rows of tombs. Her hand was cool and light as mist — as frost — as the guiding touch of that spirit might be whom the faithful of many creeds believe to lead their dead out of the darkness, into some vast new dawning beyond.... "You are not afraid? — not afraid?" the sweet voice asked again. And I suddenly became aware of the dead, lying between us, and the death-color in her face, like a flare of sunset....

Then for an instant everything became dark between me and the Sister standing upon the other side of the dead — and I was groping in that darkness blindly, until I felt a cool hand grasp mine, leading me silently somewhere — somewhere into the light. "Come! you have no claim here, friend! you cannot take her back from God! — let us leave her with Him!" And I obeyed all voicelessly. I felt her light, cool hand leading me again between the long ranks of white beds, and through the vast, bare corridors, and the shining lobbies, and by the doors of a hundred chambers of death.

Then at the summit of the great stairway, she turned her rich gaze into my eyes with a strange, sweet, silent sympathy, pressed my hand an instant, and was gone. I heard the whisper of her departing

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robe; I saw the noiseless fluttering of her white cap; — a great door opened very silently, closed inaudibly; and I was all alone. — (Some one told me, only a few days later, that the iron bell had also spoken for her, the little Sister of Charity — in the middle of the night — once!)

And I, standing alone upon the stairs, felt something unutterably strange within me — the influence of that last look, perhaps still vibrating, like an expiring sunbeam, a dying tone. Something in her eyes had rekindled into life something long burned out within my heart — the ashes of a Faith entombed as in a sepulchral urn.... Yet only a moment; and the phantom flame sank back into its ashes; and I was in the sunlight again, iron of purpose as Pharaoh after the death of his first-born. It was only a dead emotion, warmed to resurrection by the sunshine of a woman's eyes.

...Nevertheless, I fancy that when the Ringer is preparing to ring for me — and the great darkness deepens all about me — when sounds sink to their whispers and questions must remain eternally unanswered — when memory is fading out into the infinite blackness, and those strange dreams that precurse the final dissolution marshal their illusions before me — I fancy that I might hear again the whisper of a black robe, and feel a hand, light as frost, held out to me with the sweet questioning — "*Come! You are not afraid?*"

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HIOUEN-THSANG [1]

THE story of him who gave the Lotus of the good Law unto four hundred millions of his people in the Middle Kingdom, and remained insensible unto honors even as the rose-leaf to the dewdrop....

TWELVE hundred years ago, in a town of China, situated in the inmost recesses of the kingdom called Celestial, was born a boy, at whose advent in this world of illusions the spirits of good rejoiced, and marvelous things also happened — according to the legends of those years. For before his birth, the mother dreaming beheld the Shadow of Buddha above her, radiant as the face of the Mountain of Light; and after the Shadow had passed, she was aware of the figure of her son, that was to be, following after It over vast distances to cities of an architecture unknown, and through forests of strange growth that seemed not of this world. And a Voice gave her to know that her boy would yet travel in search of the Word through unknown lands, and be guided by Lord Buddha in his wanderings, and find in the end that which he sought....

So the boy grew up in wisdom; and his face became as the white face of the God in the Temple beyond Tientsin, where the mirage shifts its spectral beauties forever above the sands, typifying to the

[1] *Times-Democrat*, June 25, 1882. Hearn's own title.

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faithful that the world and all within it are but a phantasmagoria of illusion. And the boy was instructed by the priests of Buddha, and became wiser than they.

For the Law of Buddha had blossomed in the land unnumbered years, and the Son of Heaven had bowed down before it, and there were in the Empire many thousand convents of holy monks, and countless teachers of truth. But in the lapse of a thousand years and more the Lotus Flower of the Good Law had lost its perfume; much of the wisdom of the World-honored had been forgotten; fire and the fury of persecution had made small the number of holy books. When Hiouen-thsang sought for the deeper wisdom of the Law he found it not; nor was there in all China one who could inform him. Then a great longing came upon him to go to India, the land of the Savior of Man, and there seek the wondrous words that had been lost, and the marvelous books unread by Chinese eyes.

Before the time of Hiouen-thsang other Chinese pilgrims had visited the Indian Palestine; — Fabian had been sent thither upon a pilgrimage by a holy Empress. But these others had received aid of money and of servants — letters to governors and gifts to kings. Hiouen-thsang had neither money nor servants, nor any knowledge of the way. Therefore he could only seek aid from the Emperor, and permission. But the Son of Heaven rejected the

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petition written upon yellow silk, and signed with two thousand devout names. Moreover, he forbade Hiouen-thsang to leave the kingdom under penalty of death.

But the heart of Hiouen-thsang told him that he must go. And he remembered that the caravans from India used to bring their strange wares to a city on the Hoang-ho — on the Yellow River. Secretly departing in the night, he traveled for many days, succored upon his way by the brethren, until he came to the caravansary, and saw the Indian merchants with their multitude of horses and of camels, resting beside the Hoang-ho.

And presently when they departed for the frontier, he followed secretly after them, with two Buddhist friends.

So they came to the frontier, where the line of the fortifications stretched away lessening into the desert, with their watch-towers fantastically capped, like Mandarins. But here only the caravan could pass; for the guards had orders from the Son of Heaven to seize upon Hiouen-thsang; — and the Indian merchants rode away far beyond the line of the watch-towers; and the caravan became only a moving speck against the disk of the sun, to disappear with his setting. Yet in the night Hiouen-thsang passed with his friends, like shadows, through the line of guards, and followed the trail.

Happily the captain in charge of the next watch-

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tower was a holy man, and moved by the supplications of the Buddhist priests, he permitted Hiouen-thsang to pass on. But the other brethren trembled and returned, leaving Hiouen-thsang alone. Yet India was still more than a thousand miles distant, by the way of the caravans.

Only the men of the last watch-tower would not allow Hiouen-thsang to pass; but he escaped by them into the desert. Then he followed the line of the caravan, the prints of the feet of camels and horses leading toward India. Skeletons were whitening in the sands; the eyeless sockets of innumerable skulls looked at him. The sun set and rose again many times; the sand-sea moved its waves continually with a rustling sound; the multitude of white bones waxed vaster. And as Hiouen-thsang proceeded phantom cities mocked him on the right hand and upon the left, and the spectral caravans wrought by the mirage rode by him shadowlessly. Then his water-skin burst, and the desert drank up its contents; the hoof-prints disappeared. Hiouen-thsang had lost his way....

From the past of twelve hundred years ago, we can hear the breaking of that water-skin; — we can feel the voiceless despair that for a moment chilled the heart and faith of Hiouen-thsang — alone in the desert of skeletons — alone in the infinite platitude of sand broken only by the mockeries of the mirage. But the might of faith helped him on;

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prayers were his food, Buddha the star-compass that illuminated the path to India. For five days and five nights he traveled without meat or drink under blistering suns, under the vast throbbing of stars — and at last the sharp yellow line of the horizon became green!

It was not the mirage — it was a land of steel-bright lakes and long grass — the land of the men who live upon horseback — the country of the Oigour Tartars.

The Khan received the pilgrim as a son; honors were showered upon him — for the fame of Hiouen-thsang as a teacher of the Law had reached into the heart of Asia. And they desired that he should remain with them, to instruct them in the knowledge of Buddha. When he would not — only after having vainly essayed upon him such temptation and coercion by turns that he was driven to despair, the Khan at last permitted him to depart under oath that he would return. But India was still far away. Hiouen-thsang had to pass through the territories of twenty-four great kings ere reaching the Himalayas. The Khan gave him an escort and letters to the rulers of all kingdoms, for his memory is yet blessed in the Empire Celestial.

It was in the seventh century. Rivers have changed their courses since then. Hiouen-thsang visited the rulers of kingdoms that have utterly disappeared; he beheld civilizations where are now

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wastes of sand; he conversed with masters of a learning that has vanished without leaving a trace behind. The face of the world is changed; but the words of Hiouen-thsang change not; — lakes have dried up, yet we even now in this Western republic drink betimes from that Fountain of Gold which Hiouen-thsang set flowing — to flow forever!

So they beheld at last, afar off, the awful Himalayas, whose white turbans touch the heaven of India, vested with thunder-clouds, belted with lightnings! And Hiouen-thsang passed through gorges overhung by the drooping fangs of monsters of ice — through ravines so dark that the traveler beholds the stars above him at noonday, and eagles like dots against the sky — and hard by the icy cavern whence the sacred river leaps in roaring birth — and by winding ways to valleys eternally green — and ever thus into the glowing paradise of Hindustan. But of those that followed Hiouen-thsang, thirteen were buried in the eternal snow.

He saw the wondrous cities of India; he saw the sanctuaries of Benares; saw the great temples since destroyed for modern eyes by Moslem conquerors; saw the idols that had diamond eyes and bellies filled with food of emeralds and carbuncles; he trod where Buddha had walked; he came to Maghada, which is the Holy Land of India. Alone and on foot he traversed the jungles; the cobra hissed under his feet, the tiger glared at him with eyes that flamed like emeralds, the wild elephant's moun-

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tain-shadow fell across his path. Yet he feared nothing, for he sought Buddha. The Phansigars flung about his neck the noose of the strangler, and yet loosened him on beholding the holiness of his face; swarthy robbers, whose mustaches were curved like scimitars, lifted their blades to smite, and beholding his eyes turned away. So he came to the Dragon-Cavern of Purushapura to seek Buddha. For Buddha, though having entered Nirvana a thousand years, sometimes there made himself visible as a luminous Shadow to those who loved him.

But in the cavern was a darkness as of the grave, a silence as of death; Hiouen-thsang prayed in vain, and vainly wept for many hours in the darkness. At last there came a faint glow upon the wall, like a beam of the moon — and passed away. Then Hiouen-thsang prayed yet more fervently than before; and again in the darkness came a light — but a fierce brightness as of lightning, as quickly passing away. Yet a third time Hiouen-thsang wept and prayed; and a white glory filled all the black cavern — and brighter than the sun against that glory appeared the figure and face of Buddha, holier of beauty than all conceptions of man. So that Hiouen-thsang worshiped with his face to the earth. And Buddha smiled upon him, making the heart of the pilgrim full of sunshine — but the Divine spoke not, inasmuch as he had entered into Nirvana a thousand years.

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After this Hiouen-thsang passed sixteen years in the holy places, copying the Law, and seeking the words of Buddha in books that had been written in languages no longer spoken. Of these he obtained one thousand three hundred and thirty-five volumes. Other volumes there were in the Island of Elephants far to the South — in sultry Ceylon; but thither it was not permitted him to go.

He was a youth when he fled from China into the desert; he was a gray man when he returned. The Emperor that had forbade his going now welcomed his return, with processions of tremendous splendor, in which were borne the Golden Dragon and numberless statues in gold. But Hiouen-thsang withdrew from all honors into a monastery in the mountains, desiring to spend the rest of his life only in translating the word of Buddha contained in those many hundred books which he had found. And of these before his death he translated seven hundred and forty into one thousand three hundred and thirty-five volumes, as the books of the Chinese are made. Having completed his task, he passed away in the midst of great sorrow; — the Empire wept for him — four hundred millions mourned for him.

Did he see the Shadow of Buddha smile upon him before he passed away, as he saw it in the Dragon-Cavern at Purushapura?... It is said that five others with him also beheld that luminous presence

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in the cave. Yet we may well believe that he only saw it — faith-created; for Buddha having passed into Nirvana may be sought only in the hearts of men, and seen only by the eyes of faith!

Twelve hundred years ago Hiouen-thsang devoted his life to the pursuit of that he believed to be Truth — abandoned all things for what he held to be Duty — encountered such hardships as perhaps no other man ever encountered in the search for Wisdom. To-day nations that were unborn in his years are reaping the fruits of his grand sacrifice of self. His travels have been recently translated into the French tongue; his own translations are aiding the philologists of the nineteenth century to solve historical and ethnical problems; Max Müller lectures[1] upon his wonderful mission to India in the seventh century; and stories from the books he brought back from Maghada are in the hands of American readers. Who shall say that there is no goodness without the circle of Christianity! — who declare that heroism and unselfishness, and truth, and purest faith may not exist save within the small sphere of what we fancy the highest ethical civilization! The pilgrims to the Indian Palestine, the martyrs of the Indian Christ, are surely the brethren of all whom we honor in the history of self-abnegation and the good fight for truth.

[1] *Vide Chips from a German Workshop.*

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L'AMOUR APRES LA MORT [1]

No rest he knew because of her. Even in the night his heart was ever startled from slumber as by the echo of her footfall; and dreams mocked him with tepid fancies of her lips; and when he sought forgetfulness in strange kisses her memory ever came shadowing between.... So that, weary of his life, he yielded it up at last in the fevered summer of a tropical city, — dying with her name upon his lips. And his face was no more seen in the palm-shadowed streets; — but the sun rose and sank even as before.

And that vague Something which lingers a little while within the tomb where the body moulders, lingered and dreamed within the long dark resting-place where they had laid him with the pious hope — Que en paz descanse!

Yet so weary of his life had the Wanderer been that the repose of the dead was not for him. And while the body shrank and sank into dust, the phantom man found no rest in the darkness, and thought dimly to himself: "*I am even too weary to find peace!*"

There was a thin crevice in the ancient wall of the tomb. And through it, and through the meshes of a

[1] *Times-Democrat*, April 6, 1884. Hearn's own title. Signed. Almost identical with the *Item* "Fantastic" of October 21, 1879.

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web that a spider had woven athwart it, the dead looked and beheld the amethystine blaze of the summer sky — and pliant palms bending in the warm wind — and the opaline glow of the horizon, and fair pools bearing images of cypresses inverted — and the birds that flitted from tomb to tomb and sang — and flowers in the shadow of the sepulchres. ... And the vast bright world seemed to him not so hateful as before.

Likewise the sounds of life assailed the faint senses of the dead through the thin crevice in the wall of the tomb: — always the far-off, drowsy murmur made by the toiling of the city's heart; sometimes sounds of passing converse and of steps — echoes of music and of laughter — chanting and chattering of children at play — and the liquid babble of beautiful brown women.

... So that the dead man dreamed of life and strength and joy, and the litheness of limbs to be loved: also of that which had been, and of that which might have been, and of that which now could never be. And he longed at last to live again — seeing that there was no rest in the tomb.

But the gold-born days died in golden fire; and blue nights unnumbered filled the land with indigo-shadows; and the perfume of the summer passed like a breath of incense — and the dead within the sepulchre could not wholly die.

Stars in their courses peered down through the crevices of the tomb, and twinkled, and passed on;

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winds of the sea shrieked to him through the widening crannies of the tomb; birds sang above him and flew to other lands; the bright lizards that ran noiselessly over his bed of stone, as noiselessly departed; the spider at last ceased to repair her web of elfin silk; years came and went with lentor inexpressible; but for the dead there was no rest!

And after many tropical moons had waxed and waned, and the summer was deepening in the land, filling the golden air with tender drowsiness and passional perfume, it strangely came to pass that *She*, whose name had been murmured by his lips when the Shadow of Death fell upon him, came to that city of palms, and even unto the ancient place of sepulture, and unto the tomb that was nameless.

And he knew the whisper of her raiment — knew the sweetness of her presence — and the pallid hearts of the blossoms of a plant whose blind roots had found food within the crevice of the tomb, changed and flushed, and flamed incarnadine....

But She — perceiving it not — passed by; and the sound of her footstep died away forever.

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THE POST-OFFICE[1]

I

THE little steamer will bear you thither in one summer day — starting at early morning, arriving just as the sun begins to rest his red chin upon the edge of the west. It is a somewhat wearisome and a wonderfully tortuous journey, through that same marshy labyrinth by which the slavers in other days used to smuggle their African freight up to the old Creole city from the Gulf.... Leaving the Mississippi by a lock-guarded opening in its western levee, the miniature packet first enters a long and narrow canal — cutting straight across plantations considerably below the level of its raised banks — and through this artificial waterway she struggles on, panting desperately under the scorching heat, until after long hours she almost leaps, with a great steam-sigh of relief, into the deeper and broader bayou that serpentines through the swamp-forest. Then there is at least ample shadow; the moss-hung trees fling their silhouettes right across the water and into the woods on the other side, morning and evening. Grotesque roots — black, geniculated, gnarly — project from the crumbling banks like bones from an ancient grave; — dead, shrunken limbs and fallen trunks lie macerating in the slime.

[1] *Times-Democrat*, October 19, 1884. Hearn's own title. Signed.

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Grim shapes of cypress stoop above us, and seem to point the way with anchylosed knobby finger — their squalid tatters of moss grazing our smoke-stack. The banks swarm with crustaceans, gnawing, burrowing, undermining; gray saurians slumber among the gray floating logs at the edge; gorged carrion-birds doze upon the paralytic shoulders of cypresses, about whose roots are coiled more serpents than ever gnawed Yggdrasil. The silence is only broken by the loud breathing of the little steamer; — odors of vegetable death — smells of drowned grasses and decomposing trunks and of eternal mould-formation — make the air weighty to breathe; and the green obscurities on either hand deepen behind the crests of the water-oaks and the bright masses of willow frondescense. The parasitic life of the swamp, pendent and enormous, gives the scene a drenched, half-drowned look, as of a land long-immersed, and pushed up again from profundities of stagnant water — and still dripping with moisture and monstrous algæ. . . .

The ranks of the water-oaks become less serried — — the semitropical vegetation less puissant — the willows and palmettoes and cypresses no longer bar out the horizon-light; and the bayou broadens into a shining, green-rimmed sheet of water, over which our little boat puffs a zigzag course — feeling her way cautiously — to enter a long chain of lakelets and lakes, all bayou-linked together. Sparser and lower becomes the foliage-line, lower also the banks;

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the water-tints brighten bluely; the heavy and almost acrid odors of the swamp pass away. So thin the land is that from the little steamer's deck, as from a great altitude, the eye can range over immense distances. These are the skirts of the continent, trending in multitudinous tatters southward to the sea; — and the practiced gaze of the geologist can discern the history of prodigious alluvial formation, the slow creation of future prairie lands, in those long grassy tongues — those desolate islands, shaped like the letters of an Oriental alphabet — those reaches of flesh-colored sand, that shift their shape with the years, but never cease to grow.

Miles of sluggish, laboring travel — sometimes over shallows of less than half a fathom — through archipelagoes whose islets become more and more widely separated as we proceed. Then the water deepens steadily — and the sky also seems to deepen — and there is something in the bright air that makes electrical commotion in the blood and fills the lungs with richer life. Gulls with white breasts and dark, broad wings sweep past with sharp, plaintive cries; brown clouds of pelicans hover above tiny islands within rifle-shot — alternately rising and descending all together. Through luminous distances the eye can just distinguish masses of foliage, madder-colored by remoteness, that seem to float in suspension between the brightness of the horizon and the brightness of water, like

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shapes of the Fata Morgana. And in those far, dim, island groves prevails, perhaps, the strange belief that the Universe itself is but a mirage; for the gods of the most eastern East have been transported thither, and the incense of Oriental prayer mounts thence into the azure of a Christian heaven. Those are Chinese fishing-stations — miniature villages of palmetto huts, whose yellow popuations still cling to the creed of Fo — unless, indeed, they follow the more practical teachings of the Ancient Infant, born with snow-white hair — the doctrine of the good Thai-chang-lao-kinn, the sublime Loo-tseu....

II

GLASSY-SMOOTH the water sleeps along the northern coast of our island summer resort, as the boat slowly skirts the low beach, passing bright shallows where seines of stupendous extent are hung upon rows of high stakes to dry; — but already the ear is filled with a ponderous and powerful sound, rolling up from the south through groves of orange and lemon — the sound of that "great voice that shakes the world." For less than half a mile away — across the narrow island — immense surges are whitening all the long slant of sand.... Divinely caressing the first far-off tones of that eternal voice to one revisiting ocean after absence of many weary and dusty summers — tones filling the mind with even such vague blending of tenderness and of awe as

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the pious traveler might feel when, returning after long sojourn in a land of strange, grim gods, whose temple pavements may never be trodden by Occidental feet, he hears again the pacific harmonies of some cathedral organ, breaking all about him in waves of golden thunder.

. . . Then with a joyous shock we bump the ancient wooden wharf — where groups of the brown island people are already waiting to scrutinize each new face with kindliest curiosity; for the advent of the mail-packet is ever a great and gladsome event. Even the dogs bark merry welcome, and run to be caressed. A tramway car receives the visitors — baggage is piled on — the driver clacks his tongue — the mule starts — the dogs rush on in advance to announce our coming.

III

In the autumn of the old feudal years, all this sea-girdled land was one quivering splendor of sugar-cane, walled in from besieging tides with impregnable miles of levee. But when the great decadence came, the rude sea gathered up its barbarian might, and beat down the strong dikes, and made waste the opulent soil, and, in Abimelech-fury, sowed the site of its conquests with salt. Some of the old buildings are left; — the sugar-house has been converted into an ample dining-hall; the former slave-quarters have been remodeled and fitted up for guests — a charming village of white cottages,

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shadowed by aged trees; the sugar-pans have been turned into water-vessels for the live-stock; and the old plantation-bell, of honest metal and pure tone, now summons the visitor to each repast.

And all this little world, though sown with sand and salt, teems with extraordinary exuberance of life. Night and day the foliage of the long groves vibrates to chant of insect and feathered songster; and beyond reckoning are the varieties of nest-builders — among whom very often may be perceived rose-colored or flame-colored strangers of the tropics — flown hither over the Caribbean Sea. The waters are choked with fish; the horizon ever darkened with flights of birds; the very soil seems to stir, to creep, to breathe. Every little bank, ditch, creek, swarms with "fiddlers," each holding high its single huge white claw in readiness for battle; and the dryer lands are haunted by myriads of ghostly crustacea — phantom crabs — semi-diaphanous creatures that flit over the land with the speed and lightness of tarantulas, and are so pale of shell that their moving shadows first betray their presence. There are immense choruses of tree-frogs by day, bamboulas of water-frogs after sundown. The vast vitality of the ocean seems to interpenetrate all that sprouts, breathes, flies. Cattle fatten wonderfully upon the tough wire-grass; sheep multiply exceedingly. In every chink something is trying to grow, in every orifice some tiny life seeks to hide itself (even beneath the edge

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of the table on which I wrote some queer little creatures had built three marvelous nests of dry mud); — every substance here appears not only to maintain life but to create it; and ideas of spontaneous generation present themselves with irresistible force.

IV

... And children in multitude! — children of many races, and of many tints — ranging from ivorine to glossy bronze, through half the shades of Broca's pattern-colors; — for there is a strange blending of tribes and peoples here. By and by, when the youths and maidens of these patriarchal families shall mate, they will build for themselves funny little timber-homes — like those you see dotting the furzy-green plain about the log-dwelling of the oldest settler — even as so many dove-cots. Existence here is so facile, happy, primitively simple, that trifles give joy unspeakable; — in that bright air whose purity defies the test of even the terrible solar microscope, neither misery nor malady may live. To such contented minds surely the Past must ever appear in a sunset-glow of gold; the Future in eternal dawn of rose; — until, perchance, the huge dim city summon some of them to her dusty servitude, when the gray elders shall have passed away, and the little patches of yellow-flowered meadow-land shall have changed hands, and the island hath no more place for all its children....

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So they live and love, and marry and give in marriage, and build their little dove-cots, and pass away forever — either to smoky cities of the South and West, or, indeed, to that vaster and more ancient city, whose streets are shadowless and voiceless, and whose gates are guarded by God.

But the mighty blind sea will ever chant the same mysterious hymn, under the same infinite light of blue, for those who shall come after them....

V

...No electric nerves have yet penetrated this little world, to connect its humble life with the industrial and commercial activities of the continent: here the feverish speculator feels no security: — it is a fit sojourn for those only who wish to forget the harsh realities of city existence, the burning excitement of loss and gain, the stern anxieties of duty — who care only to enjoy the rejuvenating sea, to drink the elixir of the perfect air, to dream away the long and luminous hours, perfumed with sweet, faint odors of summer. The little mail-boat, indeed, comes at regular intervals of days, and the majesty of the United States is represented by a post-office — but the existence of that office could never be divined by the naked eye.

A negro, who seemed to understand Spanish only, responded to my inquiries by removing a pipe from his lips, and pointing the cane-stem thereof toward a building that made a dark red stain against

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the green distance — with the words: "Casa de correo? — si, señor! directamente detras del campo, señor; — sigue el camino carretero à la casa colorada."

So I crossed plains thickly grown with a sturdy green weed bearing small yellow flowers, and traversed plank-bridges laid over creeks in which I saw cats fishing and swimming — actually swimming, for even the feline race loses its dread of water here; — and I followed a curving roadway half obliterated by wire-grass — until I found myself at last within a small farmyard, where cords of wood were piled up about an antique, gabled, chocolate-colored building that stood in the midst. I walked half around it, seeking for the entrance — hearing only the sound of children's voices, and a baby's laughter; and finally came in front of an open gallery on the southern side, where a group of Creole children were — two pretty blond infants, with an elder and darker sister. Seated in a rocking-chair, her infant brother sprawling at her feet, she was dancing a baby sister on her knee, chanting the while this extraordinary refrain:

"Zanimaux caquéne so manié galoupé; — bourique — tiquiti, tiquiti, tiquiti; milet — tocoto, tocoto, tocoto; çouval — tacata, tacata, tacata."

And with the regular crescendo of the three onomatopes, the baby went higher and higher.... My steps had made no sound upon the soft grass;

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the singer's back, inundated with chestnut hair, was turned toward me; but the baby had observed my approach, and its blue stare of wonder caused the girl to look round. At once she laid the child upon the floor, arose, and descended the wooden step to meet me with the question — "Want to see papa?"

She might perhaps have been twelve, not older — slight, with one of those sensitive, oval faces that reveal a Latin origin, and the pinkness of rich health bursting through its olive skin; — the eyes that questioned my face were brown and beautiful as a wild deer's.

"I want to get some stamped envelopes," I responded; — "is this the post-office?"

"Yes, sir; I can give them to you," she answered, turning back toward the gallery steps; — "come this way!"

I followed her as far as the doorway of the tiniest room I had ever seen — just large enough to contain a safe, an office desk, and a chair. It was cozy, carpeted, and well lighted by a little window fronting the sea. I saw a portrait hanging above the desk — a singularly fine gray head, with prophetic features and Mosaic beard — the portrait of the island's patriarch....

"You see," she observed, in response to my amused gaze, while she carefully unlocked the safe — "when papa and mamma are at work in the field, I have to take charge. Papa tells me what to do.—

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How many did you say? — four! — that will be ten cents.— Now, if you have a letter to post, you can leave it here — if you like."

I handed her my letter — a thick one — in a two-cent envelope. She weighed it in her slender brown hand; — I suspected the postage was insufficient.

"It is too heavy," she said; — "you will have to put another stamp on it, I think."

"In that case," I replied, "take back one of the stamped envelopes, and give me instead a two-cent stamp for my letter."

She hesitated a moment, with a pretty look of seriousness — and then answered:

"Why, yes, I could do that; but — but that would n't be doing fair by you" — passing her fine thin fingers through the brown curls in a puzzled way; — "no, that would n't be fair to you."

"Of course it's fair," I averred encouragingly — "we can't bother with fractions, and I have no more small change. That is all right."

"No, it is n't all right," she returned — making the exchange with some reluctance; — "it is n't right to take more than the worth of our money; but I don't really know how to fix it. I'll ask papa when he comes home, and we'll send you the difference — if there is any. — Oh! yes, I will!— I'll send it to the hotel.— It would n't be right to keep it."

All vain my protests.

"No, no! I'm sure we owe you something. Valentine! Léonie! — say good-bye — nicely!"

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So the golden-haired babies cooed their "goo'-bye," as I turned the corner, and waved them kisses; — and as I reached the wagon-road by the open gate, I heard again the bird-voice of the little post-mistress singing her onomatopoetic baby-song:

"Bourique — tiquiti, tiquiti, tiquiti; milet — tocoto, tocoto, tocoto; çouval — tacata, tacata, tacata."

VI

... O LITTLE brown-eyed lamb, the wolfish world waits hungrily to devour such as thou! — O dainty sea-land flower, that pinkness of thine will not fade out more speedily than shall evaporate thy perfume of sweet illusions in the stagnant air of cities! Many tears will dim those dark eyes, nevertheless, ere thou shalt learn that wealth — even the wealth of nations — is accumulated, without sense of altruism, in eternal violation of those exquisite ethics which seem to thee of God's own teaching. When thou shalt have learned this, and other and sadder things, perhaps, memory may crown thee with her crown of sorrows — may bear thee back, back, in wonderful haze of blue and gold, to that island home of thine — even into that tiny office-room, with its smiling gray portrait of thy dead father's father. And fancy may often re-create for thee the welcome sound of hoofs returning home: "çouval — tacata, tacata, tacata."...

And dreaming of the funny little refrain, the stranger fancied he could look into the future of

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many years. . . . And in the public car of a city railroad, he saw a brown-eyed, sweet-faced woman, whom it seemed he had known a child, but now with a child of her own — asleep there in her arms — and so pale! It was sundown; and her face was turned to the west, where lingered splendid mockeries of summer seas — golden Pacifics speckled with archipelagoes of rose and fairy-green. But he knew in some mysterious way that she was thinking of seas not of mist,— of islands not of cloud, while the heavy vehicle rumbled on its dusty way, and the hoofs of the mule seemed to beat time to an old Creole refrain — Milet — tocoto, tocoto, tocoto.

END OF VOLUME II

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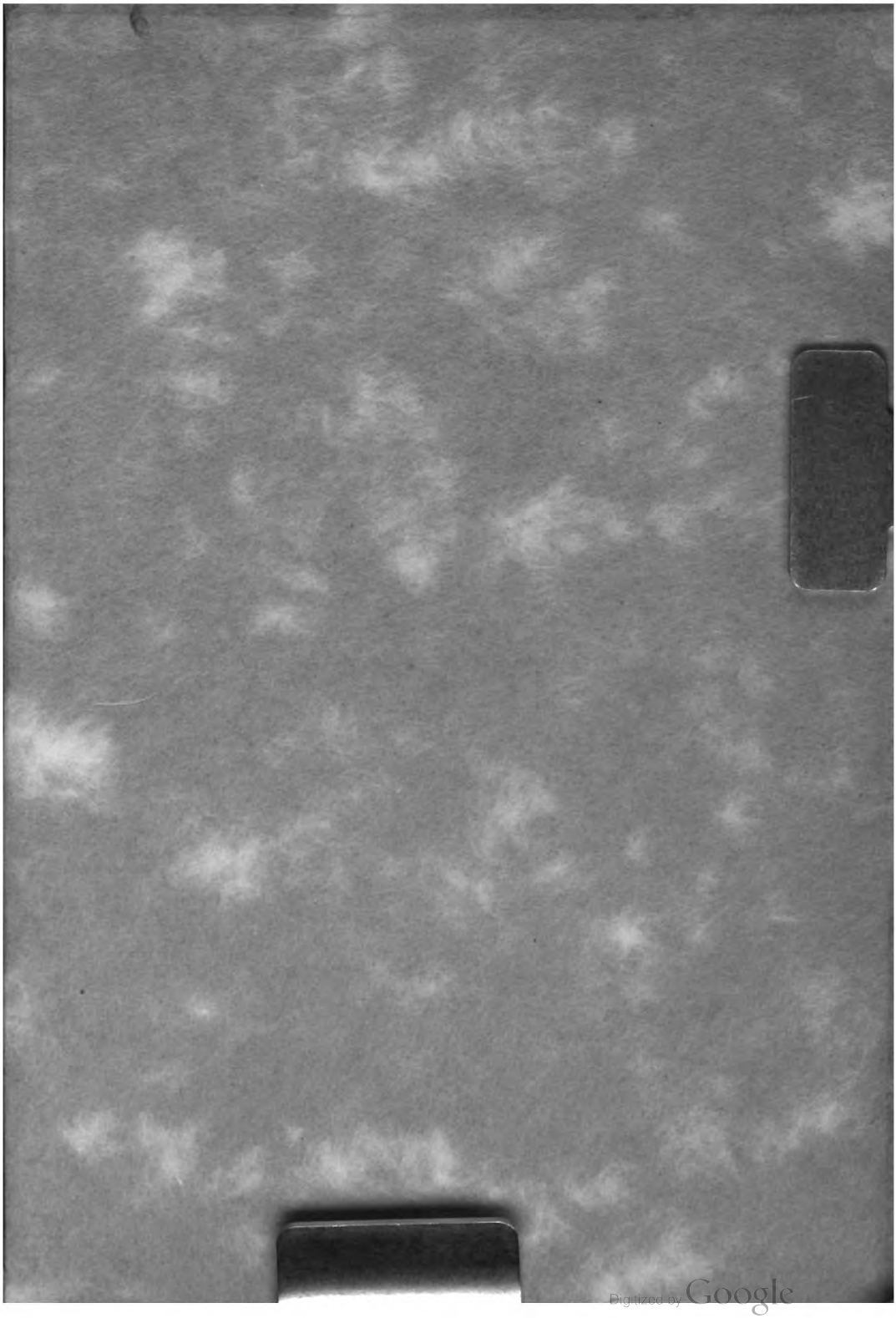
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